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U.N. general denies Muslims hold him hostage

SARAJEVO (R) — The commander of United Nations troops in Bosnia, in an amateur radio broadcast from a besieged Muslim town Saturday, backed Muslim demands for aid and an "immediate halt to the Serb offensive." But U.N. officials suspected that General Philippe Morillon's statement from the Serb-besieged eastern town of Srebrenica was made under duress. A spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said earlier that local people were preventing Gen. Morillon from leaving the town, demanding that aid convoys held up by Serb forces must be allowed in first. But in his broadcast, Mr. Morillon said he made the decision to stay in Srebrenica himself. "Fully conscious that a major tragedy was about to take place in Srebrenica, I deliberately came here and I have now decided to stay here in Srebrenica in order to calm the anguish of the population and in order to save them or try to save them," he said. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was urgently checking the authenticity of the broadcast and the conditions under which it was made. Correspondents who know Gen. Morillon said it appeared to be his voice. See earlier story on page 8



An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية



Iran says it foiled 'infiltrators' from Iraq

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said Saturday its armed forces beat back "counter-revolutionary groupings," which attacked from Iraq. The Iranian news agency IRNA, quoting a military source, said casualties were inflicted on the rebels as they were chased back into Iraq. It did not give the date of the attack. Iran's Mujahedeen-e-Khalq opposition group maintains a tank-equipped army in bases near the Iranian border in Iraq and occasionally mounts attacks across the frontier.

King hosts Iftar for judges, association heads

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday hosted an Iftar in honour of judges and heads of professional associations. The Iftar was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khaled Karaki, Justice Minister Youssef Mbaideen, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben Nayef, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the military secretary of King Hussein and His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad.

PLO seeks French support on Iraqi plan

TUNIS (R) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has asked France to press the United Nations to take up an offer from Iraq to pump \$50 million in future Iraqi oil proceeds into a cash-strapped U.N. agency aiding Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian news agency, Wafa, said Saturday the PLO appeal was contained in a message which Chairman Yasser Arafat sent to the French government Friday. U.N. trade sanctions against Iraq's oil sales, imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, would have to be eased to enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) to cash in on the offer.

Mubarak warns Iran over Sudan

KUWAIT (R) — President Hosni Mubarak, in an interview published Saturday, accused Iran of stirring up Muslim fundamentalist unrest in Egypt and said his country would confront Tehran if it deployed forces in Sudan. Mr. Mubarak, quoted by the Kuwaiti daily Al Anba, said that at present there was no Iranian military presence in Sudan. Egypt's southern neighbour, but he added: "We are able to confront (Iran) and we know the limits of the confrontation. An (Iranian) military presence there cannot be ignored. It is a factor that threatens Egyptian national security." He did not specify what he meant by confront.

Iraqi paper urges Mubarak's overthrow

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi newspaper Saturday urged Egyptians to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak, hours after the arrival of a senior Egyptian diplomat in Baghdad. "The countdown for the present regime has started... and time is ripe to replace it..." declared Babel, the newspaper published by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son, in a front-page editorial. Babel's remarks coincided with the arrival of Egyptian diplomat Rida Nasr to reopen the Egyptian mission. Babel said Mr. Mubarak betrayed the Iraqi people in the Gulf war and his "treachery... cannot be obliterated but by a great national action from Egypt of the type that will change the path of history."

Bombs explode in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Three bombs exploded in two residential areas in the suburbs of Kuwait City in the past 24 hours but no casualties were reported, officials said Saturday. They said two bombs went off in a park near Kuwait's Holiday Inn Hotel Friday night while the third exploded in a deserted house in Jeleeb Al Shioukh suburb shortly after midnight. They gave no further details.

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Sharif Zeid and Qaddoumi review peace effort, exiles

PLO official says U.S. failed to uphold principles of 242, 338

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Political Department, Farouq Qaddoumi Saturday discussed Jordanian-Palestinian relations, coordination in the Middle East peace process and the obstacles facing the process, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. Sharif Zeid and Mr. Qaddoumi also discussed the outcome of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent visit to the region and the American role in the peace process. The meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and on the Palestinian side by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Al Tayyeb Abdul Rahim.

In a statement to the press after the meeting, Mr. Qaddoumi said Jordanian and Palestinian views on topics discussed were identical, adding that both sides stressed the importance of returning all Palestinians expelled by Israel. Mr. Qaddoumi accused the United States of failing to adhere to the basic principles of Middle East peace talks.

"It is not easy to go to a settlement that has lost its principles (former U.S.) president (George) Bush stated in his initiative in 1991," said Mr. Qaddoumi.

At the outset of the peace process in October 1991, the U.S. administration said negotiations would be based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Palestinian officials have complained that the Clinton administration has not confirmed its adherence to those resolutions.

Last week, the United States and Russia sent invitations to the negotiators — Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians — to return to the peace talks in Washington on April 20.

The Palestinians say they will not attend unless Israel repatriates about 400 Palestinians it

expelled to South Lebanon in December.

Lebanon, Syria and Jordan are to withhold a response until after a Damascus meeting of their foreign ministers with Palestinian officials on March 28 and 29.

U.S. and Israeli officials have expressed confidence Arab Parties to the peace process will attend the talks with or without Palestinian participation.

Arab delegations, however, insist the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be solved without the Palestinians.

"Israel has to return all (evictees) before we resume negotiations," Mr. Qaddoumi said after a 90-minute meeting with Foreign Minister Abu Jaber.

He rejected a U.S.-brokered proposal allowing Israel to repatriate 101 Palestinians immediately and the rest by year's end.

"We refuse all deals between Israel and the U.S.," he said.

Mr. Qaddoumi said European countries have promised to work towards returning the exiles en masse.

France and Britain have strongly condemned the expulsion and urged Israel to repatriate the Palestinians.

Commenting on news reports about Israel's quest for separate deals with the Arab parties in the peace talks, Mr. Qaddoumi said an agreement reached during the first meeting of Arab countries bordering Israel still holds, and that while he was in Damascus recently it was stressed that a comprehensive solution should be found.

Asked whether there were any conflicting views between the PLO and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, on the evictees issue, Mr. Qaddoumi said, "Hamas is one faction of the national Palestinian movement and the PLO is the leadership of such movement".

He stressed that the PLO was concerned in particular in the evictees issue despite differences in views with Hamas.



An Israeli soldier covers for his colleague who checks the identity card of a Gazan north of Khan Younis in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Police chief tells Israelis they are permitted to carry weapons

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(Agencies) — Israel's police chief urged Israelis on Saturday to carry a pistol as an answer to a spate of Palestinian attacks.

The unusual appeal followed a 10-day period in which at least six Israelis have been killed and about a dozen wounded in assaults around the country and the occupied territories.

Yaacov Termer said police planned to beef up patrols around the country and put up more roadblocks to catch Palestinians entering without permits.

Mr. Termer said on Israel Radio that civilians also could help improve security. He estimated that more than 300,000 Israelis had gun licences.

"I don't suggest people go around with hunting guns, but pistols that can be tucked into a belt, don't have to be left in the safe or a drawer, and it is permissible during such a period as this... that people carry their weapons on them," he said.

"We have had several outstanding examples of how this has helped in the right place," Mr. Termer added, alluding to several recent cases in which civilians halted assailants by shooting them before police arrived at the scene.

Left-wing leaders warned of possible vigilante actions.

Referring to recent demonstrations by Jewish settlers against stabbings in the occupied Gaza Strip, Education Minister Shulamit Aloni of the leftist Meretz Party said:

"When I see these people rioting and waving a gun proudly in their hands, I very much fear what could happen."

In crowd situations, she added, in remarks to industrialists in Tel Aviv Friday, "people often cease being responsible for their actions."

Police meanwhile said that the latest Israeli attack victim, Montreal born Yehoshua Friedberg, 24, an infantry soldier whose body was found Friday alongside a major highway, was shot three or four times in the heart by a pistol at close range.

Israeli troops also found the body of a woman settler Friday and killed a 17-year-old Palestinian youth Friday.

Emunim, an organisation of Jewish settlers opposed to any territorial compromise in Arab-Israeli peace talks, immediately condemned Palestinian attacks and called for demonstrations to force the collapse of the coalition government.

Unknown assailants wounded two soldiers when they shot at an Israeli army patrol near the occupied West Bank town of Hebron Friday night, military officials said.

They said neither was seriously injured. Israel Radio said police will step up security at the expense of other tasks for several weeks. Police investigative and intelligence activities will also be enhanced. The number of roadblocks will be increased and extra searches conducted along roads leading to the occupied territories, the radio said.

The first death announced on Friday was Simcha Lavie, a 51-year-old woman found stabbed and hacked to death outside a Palestinian town in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli authorities said her body was in a mini-bus she used daily to carry Palestinian workers from the town of Khan Younis to Jewish settlements. She had been attacked by three Arabs dressed as women.

The soldier, Friedberg, 24, had been missing since Sunday but a search began only Thursday. His body was found near the main road to Tel Aviv some 15 kilometres outside Jerusalem.

PKK leader reportedly ready to halt violence

ANKARA (R) — Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan has said he is ready to end his guerrilla campaign for an independent state in southeast Turkey, an Iraqi Kurdish official said Saturday.

Serchil Kazzaz, Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said he had delivered a letter from PUK leader Jalal Talabani Tuesday to Turkey's president, prime minister, deputy prime minister and foreign minister.

About 5,500 people have been killed in Turkey, more than 2,000 of them last year, since Mr. Ocalan's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) began its fight for a separate Kurdish state in 1984.

Mr. Kazzaz told Reuters that Mr. Talabani had written the

letter outlining what he understood to be Mr. Ocalan's position following recent talks with the PKK leader in Syria.

Mr. Talabani said Mr. Ocalan had condemned terrorism and declared his preference for peaceful negotiations. He was ready to stop armed operations in favour of dialogue, which could be conducted by Kurdish members of Turkey's parliament, not the PKK.

Mr. Talabani's letter said Mr. Ocalan had renounced separatism and wished to engage in political action within the Turkish State.

Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel told journalists in Ankara that he had not yet seen the letter

Afghan peace team visits Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani arrived separately in Tehran Saturday to bolster an agreement aimed at ending Afghanistan's ethnic and religious fighting.

The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Mr. Sharif was accompanied by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Afghanistan's prime minister-designate.

Mr. Sharif and Mr. Rabbani were welcomed at the airport by Iran's president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, IRNA said.

Last week, rival Afghan factions locked in a civil war signed a peace accord in Islamabad.

Mr. Rafsanjani told Mr. Rabbani at the airport that "running the government in Afghanistan has no advantages and to undertake such a responsibility needs devotion and self-sacrifice."

He assured Mr. Rabbani that Islamic countries would grant funds Afghanistan needs for reconstruction, once there is peace.

Mr. Sharif, Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar were in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, earlier this week, where the Afghan leaders vowed to uphold the peace pact at Islam's holiest city.

The agreement was endorsed in Mecca by Hezb-e-Wahdat, a coalition of Shiite Muslim groups with allegiances to Shiite Iran.

The larger Sunni factions are backed by Pakistan. Afghanistan has been gripped by turmoil for 15 years. Last year, after ousting President Najibullah, whose regime had been backed by Moscow and a 115,000-strong army from the former

Assad and Hrawi hold talks on peace process

DAMASCUS (Agencies) —

Lebanon and Syria opened summit talks in Damascus Saturday on the twin problems of stalled Middle East talks and Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians.

Syrian officials said Lebanese President Elias Hrawi and his host Hafez Al Assad were also discussing bilateral cooperation.

The talks preceded a March 28 ministerial meeting of Arab parties to negotiations with Israel — Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians.

The meeting in Damascus will consider a joint Arab response to invitations sent by co-sponsors Russia and the United States to a ninth round of Middle East talks, stalled since Israel's mass expulsions on Dec. 17.

Diplomats said Mr. Assad was expected to brief Mr. Hrawi on Syria's consultations with Arab states over the past week on finding a solution to the expellees' crisis.

Lebanon refused to allow and the exiles, 396 of whom remain stranded at a tent camp in South Lebanon.

The United States and Russia have invited Arabs and Israelis to resume the talks on April 20 but Palestinians refuse to go until

Israel pledges to abandon expulsion.

The expelled Palestinians urged Syria and Lebanon Saturday not to yield to pressure to return to talks before their problem is resolved.

Expellee spokesman Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi said he believed Arab states would not agree to resume talks before Israel accepted to take back all the exiles as demanded by a U.N. Security Council resolution.

"President Assad and President Hrawi understand the (expellees') case and they realise the urgent need to close the (expulsions) door forever."

"I am sure that the dignity of the two presidents does not allow them to back down from their positions in front of the Zionist intransigence. We trust that the Syrian and Lebanese stands would remain in support of the deportees case."

Officials said the Lebanon-Syria summit would also review the outcome of the Middle East peace process since it was launched in Madrid in October 1991. The two presidents would also adopt a common strategy towards

(Continued on page 5)

Iran's nuclear chief denies seeking arms

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's atomic

energy chief denied Saturday Western reports that Tehran was seeking nuclear weapons but said it wanted to expand using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Reza Amrollahi, director-general of the Atomic Energy Organisation, told reporters that Iran fully complied with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and would not follow North Korea's lead to withdraw from the pact.

Western intelligence officials and politicians charge that Iran has a major nuclear arms programme and might develop a nuclear device as early as the year 2000, partly with the help of experts and equipment from former Soviet republics.

Mr. Amrollahi said Iran wanted to keep the Middle East free of nuclear weapons against the wishes of the United States and Israel, which is widely believed to have nuclear bombs.

"The pressure (on Iran) is purely political, our budget is less than one-thousand of Israel's atomic budget," he said, without giving figures.

"They want to demonise us because we are independent. But we don't have a bomb, nor are we seeking one — we oppose nuclear weapons because of our convictions."

He said the Western allegations also served to cover up the threat posed by what he said was an arsenal of 200 atomic bombs held by Israel which, unlike Iran, had not signed the NPT.

Asked about an announcement Friday by North Korea, an arms supplier to Iran, that it was withdrawing from the nuclear limitation pact, Mr. Amrollahi said: "We adhere to the NPT. It is our country's decision not to seek nuclear weapons."

Mr. Amrollahi, who is a vice-president, noted a report last year by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, that inspection of a limited number of Iran's nuclear facilities turned up

night-time sessions. Mr. Riahhi demanded life imprisonment for the chief of security in Mr. Tabet's district, Police Commissioner Ahmad Ouachi.

Mr. Ouachi is charged with obstructing justice and destroying evidence in an attempted cover-up. He is alleged to have broken into Mr. Tabet's flat after it had been sealed by investigators.

The prosecution demanded penalties ranging from three to 20 years imprisonment each for 15 alleged accomplices, including four other senior police officers.

The "Tabetgate scandal" has touched off protests from women's and human rights groups over what they called immorality and depravity in high places.

In a statement on Saturday, the opposition Socialist Union of People's Forces demanded "the resignation of everyone linked to this affair in the security department, in the government and magistrature."

Earlier this week the government said Mr. Tabet's behaviour should not be allowed to tarnish the image of the police force as a

(Continued on page 5)

Death penalty sought in Moroccan sex trial

RABAT (R) — The prosecution

in a Moroccan sex trial has demanded the death penalty for a senior police officer alleged to have held orgies at his bachelor flat, the official news agency MAP said Saturday.

Haj Mohammad Mustapha Tabet, married with two wives and five children, is charged with rape, deflowering virgins, inciting debauchery, abduction and assault in orgies staged at his bachelor flat.

Lawyers said Mr. Tabet, chief police commissioner in charge of the special branch in a Casablanca district, argued the women were willing sexual partners. He told the court he suffered from sexual obsessions and denied using violence.

During an all-night session at a Casablanca criminal court, Prosecutor Nourredine Riahhi demanded that Mr. Tabet, 54, be put to death.

The court was told the officer made 118 pornographic videos involving 518 women and girls without their knowledge over a period of years with remote-controlled cameras in his flat.

The trial is being held behind closed doors, with marathon

Doris. E. Gardiner

Wife of Tony. W.P.

Gardiner passed away Saturday March 13.
Condolences will be held at Hommar from 10. a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday March 15.

(Continued on page 5)

Stop violence, talk peace, U.S. tells feuding Somalis

ADDIS ABABA (R) — The United States told Somalia's feuding factions Friday that it would only help rebuild Somalia if they stopped killing and talked peace.

The warning was delivered at a fund-raising talks for Somalia a few days before its feuding factions hold a national reconciliation conference to restore some form of government.

Richard Cobb, head of the U.S. delegation to the three-day money meeting, said continued violence and the killings of aid workers forces the donor community "to ask whether helping Somalia is worth the risks."

"While we have come together here to pledge our commitment to a relief and rehabilitation plan for Somalia, I want to stress the United States' views that any commitments made here are contingent upon the successful efforts of Somalis to engage in peaceful, sincere political negotiations," he said.

"Continued episodes of violence that disrupt concerted world efforts now under way to help Somalis could lead eventually to their saying no to Somalis' request for assistance."

Three aid workers have been killed by Somalis since the United States spearheaded a multinational military operation in December to stop the plundering of relief for the starving.

Violence erupted this month in a clan dispute that brought relief work in the capital to a halt and killed scores of people in the southern port of Kismayu.

The conference brings together representatives of donor countries, international organisations and about 160 Somalis and is aimed at raising \$165 million.

On Monday the United Nations sponsors talks between the main 15 factions to try to set up an interim government in a country which has known nothing but clan war and anarchy since dictator Mohammad Siad Barre was toppled in January 1991.

James Glaze, British ambassador to Ethiopia, said a U.N. rehabilitation plan for Somalia made no distinction between the war-ravaged south and the break-away northern region which calls itself Somaliland.

He had recently visited the north and said "a recovery initiated and controlled by the local population rather than by the international community has begun."

"Well-trained police, unpaid and their uniforms and boots provided free by local merchants" existed in Hargeisa and Burao, he said, but regular appeals to the U.N. and other donors to support the police had fallen on deaf ears.

"We condemned the trouble-makers. But it really is time we held out a hand to the peacemakers and gave some publicity to the fact that in large areas of Somalia, Somalia peacemakers are at work and we can work with them," he said.

The U.N. plans to put hundreds of troops into northern Somalia when it takes over command from the United States of multinational forces in the country. U.S. commanders have made no attempt to send troops into the north.

The U.N. says it does not want to make a distinction between southern Somalia, scene of the worst fighting and famine, and the north, and warns that clan war and the establishment of gangland fiefdoms is gaining hold in northern parts also.

Belgium may review mission

Belgium will review its peace mission in Somalia if more of its paratroopers are killed there, Defence Minister Leo Delcroix was quoted as saying Saturday.

"If such accidents with deaths as a result should multiply in the next weeks or months, we'll have to review our tasks," Leo Delcroix told Belgian radio.

Three Belgian paratroopers were killed and two injured Friday after a mine exploded under one of their jeeps.

Another died after an accident at the airport of Kismayu, where most Belgian troops are based as part of Operation Restore Hope.

"We came here to help, to make peace possible, to bring food. We did not come here to let ourselves get slaughtered," Mr. Delcroix said.

He said Belgian troops could reduce their sphere of activity if the fatal mishaps continued, but he stopped short of saying Belgian troops might pull out altogether.

Nearly 860 Belgian soldiers monitor an area about twice the size of their own country.

Belgian troops began arriving in Somalia last December for the U.S.-led relief operation. The American contingent is due to return home over the next few months.

Friday's accident happened outside the village of Hoosingo, 160 kilometres west of Kismayu where most Belgian troops are based.

The soldiers were on patrol near the village in two jeeps. One stopped on the edge of a crater and the other was parking behind it when the mine went off beneath the second vehicle, armed forces press chief Colonel Guy Vervotte told a news conference.

"This really was an accident, normally you would expect that if you follow in someone else's tracks nothing will happen," he said. The blast killed two men in the second jeep and one in the first.



ARRAIGNED: Nidal Ayyad (centre), a Palestinian-American charged with helping the Feb. 26 World Trade Centre bombing, is led out of court Friday after his arraignment (AFP photo)

U.S. group cites poor Syrian record on respect for rights

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Syria may have one of the world's poorest records of human rights abuses against scientists, health professionals and engineers over the last 10 years, according to a report issued by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).

During the past 10 years, NAS's Committee on Human Rights has monitored and interceded in the cases of 287 of these professionals who have been imprisoned in Syria for political reasons, the report states.

Many of those imprisoned have been tortured, denied medical attention and legal counsel, and were held without charges for prolonged periods of time. NAS reports. NAS believes 49 of the 287 have been released, but has been unable to confirm the names of those released due to "the secretive manner in which human rights cases are handled by the Syrian government."

"Syria may well be the country with the highest number of scientists detained for political reasons in the world," the report states.

"It's been a great tragedy — both personally for those involved, and for the country as a whole," said Eliot Stellar, chair of the Committee on Human Rights and chairman of the Department of Cell and Development Biology at the University of Pennsylvania.

"All the while, Syria could have been benefiting from the professional talents of these people. Instead, they have been rounded up by the dozens and locked away for years," Mr. Stellar said.

The report states that during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Syrian engineering, medical and other professional associations protested the governments' state of emergency and called for human rights reform. These protests led to the arrest of scores of professionals and the dissolution of their associations.

The report notes that recently the Syrian government "has shown some interest in improving its human rights record." Syria announced the release of more than 3,500 political detainees in 1991 and 1992, a step the NAS called "praiseworthy."

This step, however, "is in effect diminished by Syria's stubborn refusal to identify the names of those released," NAS states.

The report also notes that the release of prisoners has "gone hand in hand with new arrests of others (who engage) in human rights work, undertake political activities or express their political opinions," he said.

Arab-American and Muslim organisations in the United States are working to sensitise the media and officials on this issue and their efforts are already paying off, Mr. Jahshan said.

Arab-American and Muslim groups have given dozens of interviews and issued statements both condemning the bombing and calling for tolerance, he noted.

These organisations have also contacted reporters, asking them to show more sensitivity towards the Muslim community in their news reports, Mr. Jahshan said. These reporters "have responded positively and are showing more sensitivity" on this issue, he added.

Arab-American and Muslim groups are also asking the media to offer positive coverage of their communities, Mr. Jahshan said. Many major news organisations are now working on in-depth analyses of the Arab-American and Muslim communities, he said.

Mr. Jahshan commended President Bill Clinton's statement March 5 asking the American people "not to jump to conclusions" in regards to the bombing. However, "we would like to see a more detailed statement from President Clinton calling for tolerance," Mr. Jahshan said.

Mr. Jahshan noted that the Arab-American and Muslim communities "have made progress" in expanding acceptance and tolerance.

Arab and Muslim groups urge media sensitivity

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Representatives of the Muslim and Arab-American communities have strongly condemned the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York last month and called on the media to refrain from describing the incident as an act of "Muslim terrorism."

"We unequivocally condemn the bombing in New York," Abdul Rahman Al Amoudi, executive director of the American Muslim Council (AMC), stressed during a press briefing Friday at the Foreign Press Centre.

The three suspects being held in connection with the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York City Feb. 26 are Muslims. This fact, however, should not lead the media to portray the incident as an act on Muslim "terrorism," Khalil Jahshan, executive director of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), said.

Pointing to the violent stand-off in Waco, Texas, between law enforcement authorities and the Branch Davidians, a Christian sect, Mr. Jahshan said the media has not depicted the action of this sect as "Christian terrorism."

The media, however, has not shown the same sensitivity towards the suspects being held in connection with the World Trade Centre bombing, he said.

The American Muslim Council issued a statement March 11 urging "the media to be circumspect in the coverage of this extremely sensitive issue. We must remember that individual suspects, and not the Muslim community, are on trial."

Mr. Jahshan noted that hate crimes against Arab Americans and Muslims are directly connected to Middle East conflicts and incidents of terrorism. He pointed out that hate crimes against Arab Americans increased 300 per cent during the Gulf war.

While public reaction to the bombing "has been more controlled than in the past," the Arab American and Muslim communities are concerned about reprisals, he said.

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MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Municipal worker charged with vandalising mosque

JERSEY CITY (AP) — A 35-year-old man's arrest for investigation of vandalism at a mosque after the World Trade Centre bombing will be reviewed to see if the suspect acted out of bias, a prosecutor says. Al Salam Mosque has been identified as where a suspect in the bombing was worshipped. It was vandalised two days after his arrest March 4. Hudson County prosecutor Carmen Messano said his office will determine whether to charge Robert Broadwater, said his office early last Saturday by throwing pieces of lead pipe, police said. Mr. Broadwater, a meter reader and repairman for the Jersey City sewerage authority, was arrested Thursday for the Jersey City home, police said. Jersey City is a New York suburb. He was charged with criminal mischief, a disorderly persons offense, and faced up to six months in jail and \$3,000 in fines if convicted. The storefront mosque was vandalised eight days after the Feb. 26 World Trade Centre blast that killed at least five people and injured 1,000. One of the suspects accused of participating in the bombing, Mohammad Salameh of Jersey City, prayed at the mosque. Mr. Broadwater could not be reached for comment Friday.

Cyprus, Belarus initial air agreement

NICOSIA (R) — Representatives of Cyprus and Belarus initialled an agreement in Nicosia Friday establishing air links between the two countries. Cyprus Television reported that flights were expected to begin by the end of the year.

King Fahd to give \$7.6m for worm disease

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd is donating \$7.6 million over the next four years to international health programmes to help fight guinea worm, a parasite that lives in water in Africa and grows in the bodies of people who drink it. The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said the kingdom's ambassador to Washington delivered the first of four annual payments of \$1.9 million to the Carter Presidential Centre and the World Health Organisation Thursday in the U.S. city of Atlanta. The money will be used to set up special departments in health ministries to tackle guinea worm disease, which is caused by drinking water infected with guinea worm larvae. The worm grows through painful sores. Health workers from the centre, run by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, have treated infested ponds in Ghana to filter the worm larvae from the water. In 1992, Ghana cut its rate of infestation in half to 33,464. The SPA quoted the centre as saying programmes would take place in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Nigeria has the highest rate of infestation with 281,937 cases in 1991.

Greek court rejects call for retrial of bombing case

ATHENS (R) — A Greek appeals court Friday rejected a request for the retrial of a Palestinian jailed for bombing a Pan American airliner in 1982. Mohammad Rashid's lawyers had argued that a court, which sentenced him to an 18-year jail term in January 1992 for planting the bomb and premeditated murder, lacked authority to hear the case. The bomb, which exploded on the plane over Hawaii, killed a Japanese and wounded 15 passengers. The three judges in that court found the 42-year-old Palestinian guilty by a 2-1 majority. Mr. Rashid's lawyers had sought a retrial by judges and a jury, and they challenged the retroactive application of an anti-terrorism law in the case. The lawyers said after the request was rejected that they would now focus on having Mr. Rashid's sentence cut. He was arrested at Athens airport in May 1988 on a tip-off by American authorities. Greece rejected an extradition request by the United States and put Mr. Rashid on trial. The self-avowed officer in the Palestine Liberation Organisation has always maintained he was a victim of mistaken identity and had nothing to do with the attack.

UAE president to set up \$1b charity fund

DUBAI (R) — The president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) issued a law Friday setting up a 3.67 billion dirhams (\$1 billion) charity organisation. The Emirate News Agency said the charity would start work in August, carrying out humanitarian work and building mosques, Islamic schools and research centres in the UAE and abroad. The Zaid Ben Sultan Al Nahayan Humanitarian and Charitable Deeds Establishment, named after the UAE president, would also support the propagation of Islam, the agency said. The UAE, a major oil producer, sent troops and relief aid to Somalia. The UAE president has also contributed more than \$3 million from his personal money for humanitarian aid to Bosnian Muslims.

Polish protest extradition in Iraq arms case

WARSAW (R) — Workers at a Polish arms factory protested Friday against Germany's plan to extradite their ex-manager to the United States on charges of smuggling arms to Iraq. They also accused the U.S. of trying to crush Polish competition in the international arms trade. About 200 workers from the "Izumi" arms factory in the central town of Radom staged demonstrations at the German and U.S. embassies in Warsaw, demanding that the deputy director of the factory, Rajmund Swonder, be set free. Mr. Swonder, five other Poles and a U.S. citizen are suspected of violating a United Nations trade embargo by attempting to smuggle weapons to Iraq via the United States. All except Mr. Swonder are held in a New York prison for trial. They denied the charges. The Polish government has repeatedly asked Germany not to extradite Mr. Swonder for health reasons. The Bonn government argues that it is bound by an agreement with the United States in its decision to extradite. The protest at the embassies had been letter handed to representatives of both embassies, committee "provocation." The purpose of the "provocation" was to eliminate competitors from the international weapon market," it said. Mr. Swonder has suffered a heart attack while in custody in Germany, and fit to be flown to the United States. But after Polish protests, German authorities agreed to another medical check.

U.S.: Problem is not with Islam

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States is concerned by the increase of extremists in Islamic groups who are willing to use violence, a State Department official said Friday.

"Our problem is not with Islam. It is with those who use violence and terror to advance their political objectives," Thomas McNamara, the State Department's coordinator for counter-terrorism, told a House of representatives foreign affairs sub-committee. "There has been a disturbing, recent emergence of new, radical groups that engage in terror to enhance their political agenda," Mr. McNamara said at the hearing.

He said it was too soon to tell if any foreign country or group was involved in the World Trade Centre bombing.

The three suspects arrested so far are all of Middle East origin. Investigators say two of the men received several thousand dollars

from Germany and Britain but there is no proof the money was spent in connection with the bombing.

American Arab and Muslim groups have denounced the bombing and President Bill Clinton has urged Americans not to jump to any conclusions about who was responsible for the Feb. 26 blast that killed five people and caused extensive damage.

The department lists Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria as countries that sponsor terrorism. "Two other nations, Pakistan and Sudan, remain under review as possible additions to the list of state sponsors," Mr. McNamara said.

He said Sudan had close ties with Iran and allowed several groups such as Hamas to operate in the country. "We have asked them to change their behaviour," he said.

Security consultant Brian Jenkins said the New York bombing

Egypt holds 4 for religious debate

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt has detained four Western Christians after they engaged Egyptian Muslims in religious debate, a spokesman for the group said Saturday.

Randy Hoffman said that three weeks ago police raided the homes of three Americans and a New Zealander linked to a U.S.-based firm.

An Egyptian Interior Ministry official confirmed the four were detained but declined to give further details.

A statement by the firm, Industrial Systems and Components, said the men were being held on suspicion on "exploiting religion to debate Islam and to foment sectarian sedition."

They were deprived of sleep for the first 40 hours of their detention, forced to squat in corridors for 10 hours at a time, blindfolded and ordered not to speak, it added.

Mr. Hoffman said the firm distributed makeshift housing, used computers and other items in the Middle East for small and medium-sized U.S. companies. The company, he added, did not operate directly in Egypt, but used an Egyptian agent.

He described the four as businessmen linked to a group of firms based in Warrenton, Virginia. "The Americans were employees of firms in the group, the New Zealander a consultant."

"It seems to stem from their contacts with Egyptians when they asked about their religious beliefs and explained their own," Mr. Hoffman told Reuters by telephone.

Egypt's 90 per cent Muslim majority is forbidden by law to convert to Christianity or other religions. The country's own Coptic Christian minority complains it is not allowed the same freedom to practise religion as Muslims.

Under emergency law, in force in Egypt since 1981, suspects can be detained almost indefinitely without charge by a series of court orders.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

| JORDAN TELEVISION | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Tel: 773111-19 | |
| PROGRAMME TWO | |
| 17:30 | Reves d'enfants |
| 17:40 | Les Cils de Fort Boyard |
| 19:00 | News in French |
| 19:15 | Le Journal de L'Histoire |
| 19:30 | News in Hebrew |
| 20:00 | News in Arabic |
| 20:30 | Who's the Boss |
| 21:10 | Equinox |
| 22:00 | News in English |
| 22:30 | Simon and Simon |
| PRAYER TIMES | |
| 06:27 | Sunrise, Fair |
| 05:45 | (Sunrise) Dhuhr |
| 11:45 | Dhuhr |
| 15:09 | Asr |
| 17:06 | Maghreb |
| 19:03 | Isha |
| CHURCHES | |
| St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellbich, Tel. 810740 | |
| Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785 | |
| St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 674440 | |
| De la Salle Church Tel. 661757 | |
| Terrence Church Tel. 622666 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541 | |
| Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543 | |
| Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331 | |
| Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 | |
| St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 | |
| Armenian International Church Tel. 862208 | |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328 | |
| The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932 | |
| Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691 | |
| WEATHER | |
| Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. | |
| It will be partly cloudy and temperatures will be below the annual average. Winds will be westerly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm. | |
| Mn./Max. temp. | |
| Amman | 21/12 |
| Aqaba | 9/21 |
| Deserts | 11/14 |
| Jordan Valley | 17/20 |
| Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 21. Humidity readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 31 per cent. | |

JORDAN TIMES DAILY C

| USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS | | EMERGENCIES | |
|--------------------------|--------|--|---------------------|
| NIGHT DUTY | | | |
| ADMAN: | | | |
| Dr. Bahjat Bader | 849362 | Food Control Centre | 637111 |
| Dr. Hasham Kassar | 790286 | Civil Defence Department | 661111 |
| Dr. Yagha Abdul Rahim | 736072 | Civil Defence Immediate | |
| Dr. Mahmoud Al Hindi | 898787 | Rescue | 630341 |
| Firas pharmacy | 661912 | Civil Defence Emergency | 199 |
| Ferdous pharmacy | 778336 | Rescue Police | 192, 621111, 637777 |
| Al Asana pharmacy | 637055 | Fire Brigade | 891228 |
| Nairoukh pharmacy | 626762 | Blood Bank | 775123 |
| Al Salam pharmacy | 630730 | Highway Police | 843402 |
| Yacoub pharmacy | 644945 | Traffic Police | 896390 |
| Simicani pharmacy | 637660 | Public Security Department | 63031 |
| Najib pharmacy | 847632 | Hotel Complaints | 605800 |
| | | Price Complaints | 661176 |
| | | Water and Sewerage | |
| | | Complaints | 897467 |
| | | Amman Municipality | |
| | | Complaints | 787111 |
| | | Telephone Information (directory assistance) | 121 |
| | | Overseas Calls | 10230 |
| | | Central Amman Telephone | |
| | | Repairs | 623101 |
| | | Abdali Telephone Repairs | 661101 |
| | | Jordan Television | 773111 |
| | | Radio Jordan | 774111 |
| | | Water Authority | 680100 |
| | | Jordan Electricity Authority | 815615 |
| REMBID: | | | |
| Dr. Nabeel Abul Ola | (-) | | |
| Ajouds pharmacy | (-) | | |
| ZARQA: | | | |
| Dr. Mishal Al Hijawi | (-) | | |
| Khanfeli pharmacy | 985417 | | |

Queen inaugurates women's advice office

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the occasion of International Women's Day and in continuing efforts to enhance the role of women in Jordan, Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday inaugurated the Consultation Services Branch in Zarqa, a service provided by the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC).

Prior to the inauguration, the Queen attended a small ceremony at the Chamber of Commerce in Zarqa, where she distributed gifts and certificates to 15 women for their distinguished efforts and accomplishments in the industrial sector.

Following the inauguration ceremony, the Queen toured the office premises where productions of the club beneficiaries were exhibited. She also toured the Information and Documentation Centre for Women's Studies and was briefed on the Legal Aid Programme.

Queen Noor was received by the governor of Zarqa, the chief of police, the president of the Chamber of Commerce in Zarqa, the administrative committee of the BPWC, and other government officials.

Her Majesty was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Al Faisal, Mrs. In'am Al Mufti, and Mrs. Nour Izziddine.

Trade mission heads for Germany

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian trade mission will leave Amman today for a week-long visit to Germany.

The delegation, comprising ten members of the Jordan Trade Association (JTA), will visit the cities of Frankfurt, Bonn, Hamburg and Berlin during their tour.

They will be headed by President of the JTA S.T. Darwazah. The group will meet with banking corporations, im- and exporters, manufacturers and other industrialists and will receive briefings by various governmental and non-governmental institutions on trade and investment possibilities in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The mission was organised in cooperation with the German Embassy in Amman as well as the German Federal Ministry of Economics, and is supposed to enlarge the mutual information and knowledge about the economic performance of the private sector of both countries.

It is expected that the economic ties between Jordan and Germany will be further strengthened as a result of this mission.

Jordan's cement factories diligent in combatting dust pollution — Ensour

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour Saturday stressed that the Jordan Cement Factories Company exerts strenuous efforts at the sites of its two factories in Fuheis and Rashadiyeh to combat environmental pollution.

At a press conference held at the Ministry of Industry and Trade Saturday, Dr. Ensour said the company's efforts come in implementation of directives issued by His Majesty King Hussein to give more attention to environmental problems.

The minister spoke about the company's efforts to preserve the environment and increase the efficiency of dust filters used at the two factories.

He said the ministry, the municipalities and the company understand the need to address environmental pollution, pointing

out that any effort to tackle this problem will be difficult and costly.

Speaking about the company's drive to tackle environmental pollution, he said the company is carrying out a JD 35 million programme in Al Fuheis and Al Rashadiyeh areas.

During the first stage of the programme, Dr. Ensour said, JD 10 million will be spent on installing dust filters, and the second stage will entail launching a public awareness campaign.

He stressed that the Cabinet has decided to adhere to this programme to ensure that it is fully implemented. The minister explained that the Cabinet's stand is based on its belief that the industrial sector should be supported because of its positive role in the national economy and at the same time the negative

aspects resulting from industries should be tackled and stemmed.

Director General of the Jordan Cement Factories Company Hatem Al Halawani also spoke at the press conference and dealt with measures taken by the company to address negative aspects resulting from its cement factories.

The company, Mr. Halawani said, had retained experts from international organisations and companies manufacturing dust filters, as well as consultancy firms specialised in the cement industry to study the situation and present recommendations to solve any pollution problems resulting from factories.

The has thus far been costly for the company, he said.

Mr. Halawani said the cost of urgently needed projects amount to JD 8.5 million, including mod-

ernising its filters and purchasing new ones.

When the company increases its production capacity, he said, these costs will rise to JD 10.4 million.

The cost of secondary projects stands at JD 6.5 million, he added.

Mr. Halawani said the company's board of directors will follow up on the immediate implementation of these plans through the appointment of a specialised consultancy firm to study the installation of the anti-pollution equipment in preparation to drafting the specifications needed for inviting bidders.

According to Mr. Halawani, since 1983 the company has stopped operating the old production lines and installed advanced electrical machinery to filter dust emanating from the factories. In

addition, he said, the company has asphalted a total of 100 dunums of roads and yards inside the factories and planted trees in all the company's yards to prevent dust formation as a result of winds and the movement of vehicles.

He said the company will work on following up on international developments in environmental protection adding that the company's filters operate at 99.9 per cent efficiency.

The company, he asserted, is keen on the safety of citizens and has, in cooperation with the Jordanian Society for Combating Environmental Pollution, planted trees in the areas of Fuheis and Rashadiyeh.

The press conference was attended by the mayors of Fuheis and Rashadiyeh and several citizens of the two towns.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Cabinet approves JD 5m advance to Health Ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday approved the request by the Health Ministry to draw JD 5 million from its 1993 budget to cover costs of contracts for purchasing drugs, and medical appliances in 1993. These supplies are urgently needed at health centres and government hospitals. Also Saturday, the Cabinet approved the establishment of an embassy at the resident ambassador's level in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan. The decision to establish an embassy there comes in the wake of a visit by a senior level delegation headed by Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid to the independent Islamic states.

Abu Jaber reviews bilateral relations with British envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber reviewed with visiting Assistant Under Secretary of the British Foreign Office for Middle Eastern Affairs Michael Burton bilateral relations and means of enhancing them in all fields. The two officials also exchanged views on the latest political developments in the region. Ministry Secretary General Hussein Hamami also met with Mr. Burton and discussed with him issues of common interest.

Government to pay salaries before Eid

AMMAN (Petra) — Civil servants will cash their salaries before the Eid (Al Fitr holiday). Ministry of Finance sources said Saturday. Staff salaries are normally paid around the end of each month.

House speaker receives Russian, Iranian envoys

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat Saturday received the Russian ambassador to Jordan and reviewed with him scopes of bilateral cooperation in the parliamentary field. The Russian ambassador delivered to Dr. Arabiyat a message from the President of the Supreme Soviet Council, in which he extended an invitation to a Jordanian parliamentary delegation to visit Russia. Also Saturday Dr. Arabiyat received the Iranian charge d'affaires in Jordan and discussed with him means of enhancing bilateral relations in the parliamentary field.

Abu Dhabi receives Jordan's envoy

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Chairman of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ben Abdullah Al Muhairabi Saturday received Jordan's ambassador to the UAE Awad Abu Obeid who congratulated him on his recent election as council chairman. Mr. Muhairabi and Mr. Abu Obeid discussed the latest developments in the Arab arena and issues of common interest. Mr. Abu Obeid briefed Mr. Muhairabi on parliamentary life in Jordan and the democratisation process. Mr. Muhairabi stressed the need to enhance parliamentary cooperation between the two countries and welcomed Jordan's participation in an Abu Dhabi fair which will be opened in mid-April.

Ministry, Caritas to open exhibit in Al Fuheis

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Amin Awad Mashagbeh Monday will open an exhibition of handicrafts in Al Fuheis city organised by the Jordan Caritas Society, according to Society Director General Father Mousa Adeli. Father Adeli said the society has started distributing food supplies to needy families in the Mahees and Umm Al Ussoud areas, in a drive to help the needy before the end of Ramadan and the beginning of the Eid Al Fitr feast.

Woman to head new division at Labour Ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Labour has established a new division for working women and appointed Itaf Halasa as head of this division. The new division will be responsible for collecting data and statistical information on the status of working women and problems facing them. It will also maintain coordination and cooperation with official and national institutions concerned with working women. The division will further work out solutions to individual problems facing working women in the local labour market.

Amman to host regional education meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — A two-day regional consultation on the educational renovation programme in the Arab states will be held here on Apr. 17, according to Director General of the Educational Planning, Development and Research Department at the Ministry of Education Wajih Al Farah. The meetings will discuss working papers on the programme's achievements at the national and pan-Arab levels, and re-examine the plan of action adopted by the Sixth Consultancy. Participants will also discuss means of ensuring the smooth flow of information and exchange of expertise in the field on education among the participating countries. Taking part in the conference will be Iraq, Algeria, Bahrain, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Somalia, Yemen, Palestine, Kuwait, Egypt and Jordan.

Madaba starts 3rd annual charity drive

AMMAN (Petra) — The Third Annual Charity Campaign Saturday started in Madaba district with the participation of 200 boy scouts and girl guides from the district's various schools. District Governor Musleh Al Tarawneh, who heads the charity campaign committee in the district, called on citizens to cooperate in bringing the campaign to a successful end. The district's social services centres have already prepared lists of the needy in various parts of the district in order to distribute the revenues of the campaign to them.

Panel set to build Irbid orphanage

IRBID (Petra) — The Alms and Orphans Sponsors Committee in Irbid has finalised arrangements to build an orphanage in the city. The committee currently sponsors 300 orphans and provides them with education, health and social care.

Arab workers panel visits China

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Arab Federation of Workers in banks, insurance companies and financial institutions are in Peking on a several-day visit to China at an invitation from the Chinese Federation of Labour Unions. The visit aims to enhance cooperation between the Arab and Chinese federations.

Awqaf celebrates Badr Battle



Mohammad Adnan Al Bakht

Mutah chief to head Al Al Bait Foundation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Saturday celebrated the Badr Battle, which took place on Ramadan 17 in the second Hegira year and the Mecca Conquest.

Addressing the celebration, held at the Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi reviewed the lessons learnt from these two occasions, saying that Islamic history is full of colourful, good, memories and victories.

He said the Badr Battle between Muslim armies and the tribes of Kuraysh opponents of the Prophet Mohammad and his followers was a decisive battle that ended in a tremendous victory for the Muslims.

Sheikh Tamimi said the battle took place in the second Hegira year, when the Prophet Mohammad began laying down the solid and proper bases for the Islamic state and Islamic society, in preparation for moving on to areas outside the Arab Peninsula.

The minister also explained that the Mecca Conquest took place during Ramadan when four Islamic armies entered into Mecca to purge it from the idols, to lift injustices befalling its people, and to liberate them from hunger, fear and torture.

The Mecca Conquest was triggered by non-Muslims who breached the conditions of a treaty known as Suh Al Hudaibiah, concluded between Muslim armies and non-Muslim armies who stood in the face of the Prophet Mohammad's call (dawa) for spreading Islam.

A provision of Hudaibiah treaty gave Mecca tribes the right to join either Muslims or non-Muslims.

One of the tribes that opted to join Mohammad's army was attacked by Mohammad's opponent armies. Therefore armies, under obligation to defend the tribe, fought their opponents on the 20th day of Ramadan, won victoriously and entered Mecca, where they started their Islamic dawa (call for Islam).

University, college to honour Saladin

AMMAN (Petra) — "Saladin and Unity" will be the title of a lecture to be delivered by History Professor Mustafa Hiyari of the University of Jordan at the University of Applied Sciences Monday at noon.

The lecture falls within the university's celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the death of Muslim leader Saladin.

The Kingdom's celebrations of the anniversary were opened by His Majesty King Hussein in Mutah University last week.

On a related event, Princess Rahma College for Social Services is organising a contest for articles and studies on the life of Sultan Saladin, who was born in Iraq in 1137 and died in Damascus in 1193.

The winning articles and studies will be discussed in a seminar to be held at the university at a later time.

Group officials deny firing of member-engineer was political

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A decision by the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) to summarily dismiss association member Said Qammouh, who chaired the JEA personnel committee, still stands, according to JEA officials. But plans by some members to protest this measure as unjust and taken for political reasons continue.

One day after the decision was taken on Feb. 23, a group of engineers held a meeting at the Professional Associations complex in Salt to protest the action and to lobby support for efforts to reverse that decision.

The engineers considered the dismissal a precedent which does not serve the interests of the association and does not comply with the pioneering role the JEA has always played in defending citizens rights.

In Amman, hundreds of engineers met at the Professional Associations complex to protest the Qammouh dismissal.

The engineers were joined by doctors, lawyers and others in calling on the association's general assembly to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss the decision.

The meeting, held on Mar. 3, resulted in the formation of a committee to defend member-engineers of the JEA.

The committee issued a statement refuting the reasons given by the association's board for firing Mr. Qammouh and called on the board to reverse its decision.

The statement said "The dismissal decision was an object of surprise for all segments of Jordanian society, particularly at this time, when Jordan is establishing a centre for human rights."

It said that although the JEA's board raised the slogan of "professionalising the association" during the election campaign which brought the new board to office, it seems this slogan is being employed to dominate the association's resources and use the board as a tool to settle political accounts.

The statement blamed the vice president of the JEA for the dismissal and expressed astonishment at his decision, which the statement maintained, conflicts with what he preaches in terms of democratisation of the JEA work.

Commenting on the situation, JEA President Hosni Abu Ghaidia said the decision was ordinary and not politically motivated.

He pointed out that the decision to fire Mr. Qammouh was taken because Qammouh had received two letters of reprimand and one warning.

The JEA president categorically denied that political motives were behind the decision, adding that political affiliations had no effect whatsoever on the decision, otherwise, many engineers would have been dismissed.

He said the JEA does not give any consideration or weight to political affiliations or ideologies. He also dismissed as baseless the argument that political pressures by some currents on the board were behind the decision

to dismiss Mr. Qammouh. He stressed the validity of the decision, saying that it is an irrevocable administrative act.

The association's vice president, Azzam Al Huneidi, said he was not behind the dismissal decision, and stressed that it was taken for professional and not political reasons.

He maintained that the board acts in the best interest of its members, rather than in the interest of certain groups or trends.

Mr. Huneidi said the board's decision will not leave the door open for future boards to dismiss whoever they do not want and he reiterated that the board's decision was an administrative one.

The vice president admitted that he, himself, was dismissed from the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) for political reasons, and said, "I do not like to see anybody dismissed for the same reasons."

Mr. Huneidi said the board's decision was final and irrevocable, adding that it was in the interest of the engineers and the association.

Malnutrition could be higher than assumed

By Cosima Hadidi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Malnutrition among infants and children, and general nutritional deficiencies may be a bigger problem in Jordan than previously assumed.

More accurate measuring and monitoring of the health standards of Jordanians are needed, especially in the rural and remote regions of the country, concluded Ibrahim Jilani who, with the assistance of Hussain Qazaq and Zohair Al-Arabi, recently conducted three nutritional field studies.

The studies covered northern, middle and southern Jordan, including rural, urban and bedouin populations. They were conducted on patients who visited health centres over a ten-day period, and reviewed the overall nutritional status of the population, the incidence of underweight among children, and anaemia among pregnant women.

The first study found a number of nutritional deficiencies and problems stemming from faulty nutrition among various age groups.

Overweight was found to be a problem in persons 46 years old and over, followed by the age group of 19-30 years.

Unbalanced eating habits, lack of exercise and a traditional diet consisting of mainly carbohydrates, were the reasons given for this problem.

Protein and energy deficiencies were also high in this age group because with increased age, the body cannot sufficiently use protein and energy.

Underweight, on the other hand, was found to be a problem in the age group of 0-5 years, followed by 6-12 years. This was mainly due to an insufficient food supply (particularly animal foods) and epidemic diseases.

The 0-5 age group also suffered from protein and energy deficiencies for the same reasons.

Vitamin A deficiency was high in Amman and Irbid, and was expected to be high in other areas as well, if it could be measured properly there.

A high vitamin C deficiency was found in the region of the northern Jordan Valley, where it was concluded that there are different microclimates in the body that increase the need for vitamin C.

Vitamin B deficiency was highest in Mafrqa, the northern Jordan Valley and Irbid.

Vitamin D and calcium deficiencies were not found to be a problem in Jordan because the climate is sunny most of the year and the diet is rich in calcium.

Iron deficiency, however, was a problem, particularly in regions of high elevations and the desert.

Reasons for this included the lack of iodisation of salt, the short supply of local seafood products, and the high price of imported seafood.

Iron deficiency was highest in age group 10-45 because in this category women are in the child-bearing stage and men are working hard.

The same deficiency was also found among 0-5 year olds because of faulty nutritional habits.

Based on these findings, the researchers decided to look at child malnutrition and underweight more closely.

Dr. Jilani said that balanced, healthy nutrition is the basic factor in child development and growth.

The food that is given to infants and children by their parents is controlled by parents' awareness of health and nutrition, their dietary habits, the food available in local markets, and the environmental conditions under which the family lives.

The study found that malnutrition among Jordanians was caused by three major factors:

— First, the lack of proper food items in the home due to low income or unavailability in the local market.

— Second, lack of education about a balanced diet and proper nutrition.

— Third, poor health of the child due to acute and chronic illness or the lack of proper health services.

Dr. Jilani emphasised that educating parents on a balanced nutrition remained a priority.

He cited the example of a woman in a rural region whose son suffered from protein deficiency.

After Dr. Jilani had successfully treated the child, the mother gave him a basket of fresh eggs to show her appreciation.

He asked the mother where she got the eggs from, and she responded that she raised chickens in her back-yard.

"But eggs are a treasure of protein and would have prevented your son's illness," the doctor said. "Why didn't you feed them to him?" he asked. Dr. Jilani was shocked to hear her reply.

"I sell these eggs in the market and with the money I buy candy and sweets which I give to my son."

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WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled "The Present Islamic World in Photos and News" at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

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Chelia Constantinou

Rasha C. Nabeel

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Defending liberty

THE DEFEAT Wednesday of a Muslim Brotherhood motion to segregate the sexes at school is a big event in Jordan's democratic process and a significant win for Jordanian liberals. It has demonstrated that the spirit of liberalism that the Kingdom acquired in the past 40 years is still alive despite the battle waged against the values of liberty by conservatives in the last four years.

The litigation made by Deputy Faris Nabulsi in favour of people's freedom of choice and his refutation of the Islamists' interpretation of Islamic Sharia are testimony to the power of reasoning that seculars hold over conservatives dogmatic excesses. Mr. Nabulsi's eloquent and well-researched speech should be viewed by liberal forces in the country as a proof that they need not fear a backlash every time they appeared or sounded, in Parliament or outside it, as being irreligious.

Traces of this fear were still evident Wednesday in Deputy Prime Minister Thouqan Hindawi's defence of the government position. Although Mr. Hindawi had a number of points in his favour — including the scarcity of schools and the fact that mixed schools had less "problems" than segregated ones — he chose to be apologetic when he said that the norm is to segregate boys and girls rather than mix them.

Given the evidence provided by Mr. Nabulsi against segregation and the Ministry of Education's findings, wouldn't it be more proper to mix students rather than segregate them at our schools? If the studies conducted by the Ministry of Education, as Mr. Hindawi contends, support secular and liberal arguments that co-education is healthier, shouldn't we opt more for mixed schools?

The government has been accused on many occasions of appeasing the conservatives. That might not be the case. The government stand on this and other similar issues has been criticised as being accommodating. If Jordan wants to be the model for Arab countries to emulate, then the government, the liberals and the seculars must make their voice loud and clear in issues that touch on people's basic human rights and basic liberties.

As we see Wednesday's vote as a turning point in parliamentary and political discourse in the country, we only hope that the parties concerned will ensure that Jordan would not abandon its liberal, political, economic and especially social policies. Liberal movements in the country should unite against backward-pulling forces. Jordanians should not be made to lose their basic liberties for the sake of political pluralism.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

UNDER THE headline, "Why Syria First," Al Dustour Arabic daily said in an editorial Saturday that the slogan, Syria First, which was announced by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ahead of his visit to the United States clarifies the context within which Mr. Rabin wants to define the U.S. involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace talks as a full partner. The paper said Mr. Rabin realises that if the United States were to participate in the talks as a full partner, it would be committed to the letters of assurances it sent to the parties to the conflict before the Madrid talks. These letters, said the paper, emphasise a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on all fronts on the basis of the land for peace formula and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which explicitly call for an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. Therefore, said Al Dustour, the Israeli emphasis on the Syrian part of the conflict is aimed at achieving two Israeli objectives: neutralising Syria through reaching a peace treaty with it, similar to the one it has with Egypt, and forcing the other Arab parties to accept Israeli solutions, especially in relation to the Palestinian problem and the duration of the proposed Palestinian selfrule. This Israeli formula, said the paper, comes at the time when the parties to the talks have been invited to resume the negotiations as Israel's rejection of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the immediate return of Palestinians expelled to south Lebanon to the occupied territories, has put more obstacles in the face of the peace process.

It is a secret to no one that Israel's aim is to divide Arab ranks, said the paper. The paper called on the United States to play the role of an honest mediator in the peace talks. Al Rai Arabic daily said Saturday that the West is watching with pleasure the developments in Russia. The Russians who lost everything for a Western illusion called democracy have discovered that they have not even attained that illusion, said that paper. The West, it said, is not attaching any value to the former Soviet Union after the latter betrayed itself and became marginalised on the international arena. In an editorial headed, "Fascist Democracy," the paper said the collapse of the Soviet Union led to creation of a new world order dominated by the United States which considers the former Soviet Union an insignificant body that it manipulates the way it wants. The paper said the U.S. domination of the new world order could end if the Soviet peoples begin to realise the humiliation that was brought upon them by some of their leaders. Al Rai said the Soviet peoples could turn the tables in days, not years, and restore the dignity and respect their country used to enjoy. The paper expressed hope that the former Soviets will wake up from the false Western dream called democracy because the success of the American plan in the area will produce Fascist regimes similar to those which killed millions in Latin America with the support of the United States and other Western democracies.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

How to ruin education economically

THANKS TO a secular majority turned aggressive in the Lower House of Parliament, the recommendation of the Education Committee, dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, to ban co-education schools was killed. The rational decision, taken with a comfortable majority, saved tens of millions of scarce funds, which would have been wasted on duplicating schools in small villages, where the number of students hardly justifies one co-education school.

Unfortunately, that odd recommendation was not the only "innovation" that the Education Committee has come up with. The committee has three more recommendations to offer which the Lower House of Parliament should vehemently and overwhelmingly reject.

The first recommendation is to make salaries payable to teachers in private schools equal to the salaries payable in the schools of the Ministry of Education. If this recommendation were to be adopted, then salaries in private schools will be altered in both directions. Some teachers will get more pay and others will get less.

Salaries in the private schools vary widely. Unlike government salaries they are not determined by a rigid scale, whereby an employee is promoted due to passage of time irrespective of his or her performance. Salaries in private schools respond to supply and demand, and promotions favour good teachers. Therefore,

they are more adequate and fair than salaries in public schools where good performers and bad performers are treated alike.

The levels of salaries in the private sector do not match the salaries in the public sector in any activity. There is no reason why education should be singled out for identical scales.

Teachers in public schools are divided among 10 grades according to the level of qualifications and number of years in service. It is not practical to classify teachers in private schools according to the same 10 grades in order to pay equal salaries. Nor is it known who will make up the losses of private schools, which may be unable to raise their salaries because they charge moderate fees.

The second recommendation, which the Education Committee came up with, is to tighten up and expand the supervision of the Ministry of Education over private schools, both from educational and financial standpoints.

It is agreed that most private schools are of better quality than government schools as evidenced by the quality of graduates and their scores in the national general exams such as Tawjihi. Therefore, the committee should have asked the Ministry of Education to learn from the excellent private schools, and adopt part of their approaches and curricula in order to improve its own level of performance.

It does not make sense to ask the heavy and deficient body to

lead and supervise distinguished schools, unless the purpose of the committee is to lower the standards of private schools, and spread weakness equally among all students.

The third recommendation was to raise the minimum duration of service before retirement for teachers from 20 to 25 years. The result of such a step will be to deprive the ministry of the right to rid itself as early as possible of mediocre teachers and students for a teachers will remain on the back of the ministry and students for a minimum of 25 years of failure and low productivity.

Finally, the committee should have noticed that the private sector is becoming increasingly ready and willing to establish schools, which will not only improve the quality of education in the country, but will also save the hard pressed treasury some costs.

The committee should have asked the government to encourage the private sector, and give it more incentives to shift a larger part of the burden of education from the government to the private sector. This would save the ministry some resources to be directed to more schools in villages and smaller towns as long as the private sector is willing to shoulder a larger part of the burden in cities and larger towns.

Many families in towns and cities are willing and can afford to send their children to private schools, especially when fees in private schools differ to accommodate various levels of income.

By Stephen S. Rosenfeld

WASHINGTON — It used to be that the dirty work of American foreign policy was assigned to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) — the sort of business, like anti-Soviet covert operations, that was thought to be essential but that the government did not wish to take on up front.

With the passing of the cold war there is less of that to be done, but other hard cases linger, of which Yugoslavia is currently the most conspicuous.

Now, however, they are more likely to be brought out into the light of day and assigned to the United Nations.

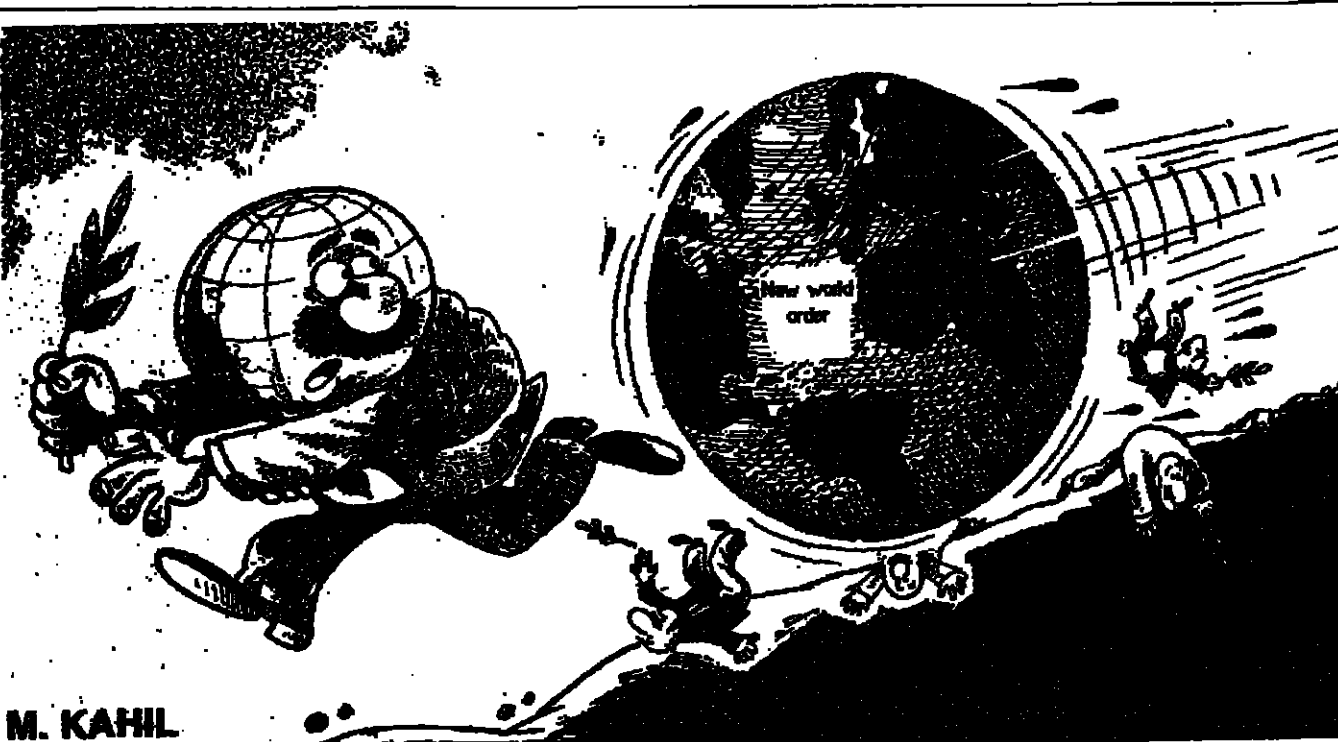
An important American purpose is being served by this old institutional progression: to spread the burden and avoid sole responsibility. President Bill Clinton's show of hedged activism is following this pattern.

There is visible, too, an intention to make a virtue out of the very process of international diplomacy. Some enthusiasts — not Mr. Clinton — may even be more interested in the example of consultation in Bosnia than in the outcome that the process is producing there.

But the outcome is central. Designers of the United Nations' 10-province Bosnia plan see in it the hope, the only hope, to stop the war and the killing and to keep the war from spreading. They regard this as a goal that needs no apology.

With no little pride in their handiwork, they challenge critics to say what alternative policy might have been created out of the poor materials the nations of the world brought to them. The world body was not handed this case until disintegration was far

The United Nations A dumping ground for the mistakes of its members



advanced. And no force was made available to help Muslims even the odds against preponderant Serbian and Croatian arms.

Much is said, and in some rapture, to the effect that finally the United Nations is doing these days what its high-minded founders had in mind in establishing a body to keep the international peace. You can say the United Nations had the truly difficult double task not only of saving

likely to be available. It may even seed the next Balkan war as Muslims gather over time for justice and revenge.

The United Nations' connection to Bosnia's Muslims is painful. The Muslims are the party most in need of the United Nations' rescue. Yet seeing that the United Nations has been unable to keep them from being butchered and uprooted, they display little loyalty in return. On the

contrary, they feel betrayed.

To the United Nations' horror, desperate and cynical Muslim units have fired mortars from a hospital, provoking a typically merciless Serbian response that Muslims then denounced as Serbian degeneracy. Muslims have sought to enlist the United Nations to police Serbian units but not their own. This angers U.N. officials, whose focus on their own neutral mediator's role vis-

ibly shrinks their empathy for what Muslims see as a mortal struggle for their very survival. It is not some abstract disembodied "U.N." that has brought the organisation to this tortured pass. Nor is it its secretary-general, who has ambitions for the institution but not independent authority. It is the collective decisions of the U.N. membership, especially the top dogs. This makes it idle to think that the United Nations, to avoid tarnish, could have stayed out of Yugoslavia. The members for their own reasons engaged it — and engaged it in the pinched way we see today.

I happen to think that Germany is more responsible for the form engagement took than any other outside state. The Germans, attentive to Yugoslavia's Catholic voices, lit the fuse by granting recognition to some constituent republics, notably Croatia, before fair provision had been made to protect the rights of the resident Serbian minorities. Thence flowed the subsequent horrors, including the Serbs' own continuing disproportionate and monstrous acts.

The United Nations is doing a mean job — the job its masters bid it to do. This is the way it used to be with the CIA. Only when the regular agencies had failed — in dealing with Fidel Castro, for example — was it called in. It will take time to tote up the costs of using the United Nations as a dumping ground for its members' political mistakes. What number of small and not so small nations are going to redouble their determination not to have to depend on the United Nations for their ultimate security?

International Herald Tribune.

French politics

The lesson from Lyon

By Bernard Edinger
Reuter

LYON — A bitter election battle raging in France's second city carries a lesson for anyone with ambitions on the right: Don't mess with Jacques Chirac, the bulldozer of French politics.

Lyon Mayor Michel Noir, once one of the most promising young French politicians, tried and miscalculated.

Opinion polls suggest 48-year-old Noir is likely to be narrowly beaten by a Chirac loyalist in the month's parliamentary elections and could lose his city hall power base in two years' time as well.

His fortunes turned in 1991 when, with a handful of fellow "quadrans" (French for "Fort something" media-genic politicians), he declared the time had come to "renovate" the centre-right opposition — including Mr. Chirac's Neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), of which he was a member.

For Chirac, now 60, the move was a thinly-disguised attempt to squelch his generation out of leadership positions before the 1995 presidential election.

"Chirac really is a bulldozer," said ecologist leader Brice Lalonde. "No one crosses him and gets away with it. Sooner or later, Chirac gets even with them and crushes them."

Mr. Chirac, who has quashed all attempts to seize his spot as conservative frontrunner for the succession to Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, quickly isolated Noir and effectively forced him out of the RPR.

He hand-picked popular local businessman Alain Merieux to run against Mr. Noir in the March 21-28 election.

Compounding Mr. Noir's troubles, Pierre Botton, his son-in-law and former campaign man-

ager, has been in custody since November charged with swindling up to 30 million francs from private investors. An examining magistrate has questioned Mr. Noir in the case.

Ironically, Mr. Noir owed his early political rise to Mr. Chirac, who as prime minister appointed him minister for foreign trade in 1986-88 when the Centre-Right shared power with Mr. Mitterrand.

In 1989, he was elected mayor of Lyon, France's second largest city and a dynamic commercial

and industrial centre.

A handsome, tall man with a charmer's smile, Mr. Noir's dashing style and plain speaking soon captured public imagination and he soared in popularity polls.

When some conservatives toyed with the idea of an electoral pact with the extreme-right National Front, Mr. Noir entered the quotation books by saying it was "better to lose an election than lose one's soul."

He recalled that his working-class father, a resistance fighter, was sent to a Nazi concentration

camp during the World War II German occupation of France.

Mr. Noir, once considered a presidential contender, accuses RPR leaders of "settling personal scores" against him.

"We failed," the dejected mayor told Reuters. "Resistance to change by the political parties was too strong."

Fidgeting nervously in his office, Mr. Noir said he was a loyal member of the opposition and only wanted the RPR to call off the pressure. But it is too late.

"If you want party backing, you have to play loyally," said

Mr. Merieux, who joined the race just a few weeks ago, said he was standing because if Mr. Noir were reelected, Lyon would be side-lined under a Centre-Right government.

He bristled only slightly when asked if he was not standing solely at Mr. Chirac's behest because he owed him an old favour.

"I'm a big boy and I can decide for myself what to do," he said in the tone of a man born to wealth and power.

Aides urged journalists not to ask him about the nightmarish days in 1976 when criminals kidnapped his nine-year-old son.

Mr. Chirac, who was prime minister at the time, overruled police opposition to a deal with the hostage takers and told Mr. Merieux to do whatever was needed to save his son. The boy was freed after a ransom was paid.

Mr. Merieux is said to have told Mr. Chirac afterwards he was eternally grateful and would do him any favour.

Toppling Michel Noir could just be that favour.

LETTERS

Unbalanced intervention

To the Editor,

INDEED, "too much government involvement could prove pernicious." Nobody will disagree with Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan (letter, March 6, 1993).

The fact is, however, that the government, through its Ministry of Education, does not need any further invitation to intervene in the administration of private schools since this ministry is already intervening in any and everything, and more often than not, too much so.

Except — as it seems — in the vital issue of tuition fees. Alone, the obvious discrepancy of fees between the different private schools, within their different categories, suggests that some control is desirable.

Nevertheless, all the time the government is exercising its authority upon many other private institutions and enterprises (e.g. hotels, hospitals). I believe this should be seriously considered since private schooling in Jordan is going to be essential for a longer time to come, mainly because of the very reasons Her Royal Highness mentioned — taxation policies, and size of the family, etc.

S. Salah,
Amman.

Thank you all — Somalis

To the Editor,

WE ARE a group of Somalis living in Jordan under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) crisis. We would like this forum offered by the Jordan Times to express our appreciation and thanks to:

— The government and people of Jordan who have been very given us shelter at our time of need, and we hope to remain here until our problems at home are resolved;

— The Embassy of Italy, the ambassador of Italy and all staff members of the mission for their kind care and assistance as well as developments in Somalia. We hope that the cooperation between who takes power in Somalia;

— The UNHCR mission in Amman and its officials, particularly its Chief Javier Reidmatten, who have helped us with kindness and understanding;

— Last, but not the least, the Jordan Times, which gives us news of in-depth coverage one of its staff members who visited Somalia late through the newspaper.

Ibrahim Hussien Ali, Aqaba, and
Abdul Kader Haj Ibrahim,
University of Jordan

Iran denies seeking nuclear arms

(Continued from page 1)

no evidence of an arms program.

He denied a British television report this week that Iran sent a delegation to Kazakhstan last year to buy bomb-making equipment. "Iran has not had, nor will have, any cooperation with former Soviet republics in nuclear industry," he said.

But Iran, he said, needed nuclear technology. "With 420 nuclear power plants operating around the world, our people have a right to have one or two."

Iran, which has no operating nuclear power plants, planned to produce 20 per cent of its electricity from atomic stations in 20 years, he said.

Iran has finished work on five of 12 uranium exploration projects. "We hope to produce and

sell uranium to the world some day," he said.

China said last month it had agreed to build two 300-megawatt nuclear power stations in Iran.

Mr. Amrollahi said Iran still wanted KWU, the energy unit of the German firm Siemens, to finish a bigger plant which it started to build on Iran's Gulf coast in the 1970s but abandoned unfinished after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Bonn has refused to allow KWU to finish the plant on which Iran says it has spent more than \$3 billion.

Mr. Amrollahi said the organisation he has headed for 15 years is also engaged in producing radioactive materials for medical use and providing protection to more than 16,000 medical and industrial employees who work with radioactive materials.

Death penalty sought in sex trial

(Continued from page 1)

whole.

The association of democratic women said it was "horrified by the unspeakable violence to which women were subjected."

The fundamentalist Reform and Renewal Movement called for Islamic law to be applied and said Mr. Tabet should be crucified or stoned to death.

The trial continues with defence pleas.

A lawyer fainting and was taken to hospital for treatment after watching pornographic videos screened in court during the night, MAP said.

Women-specific projects, a priority of UNFPA

IN PURSUING its mandate to enable countries to respond to population and development concerns, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has always been keenly aware of the universality and indivisibility of human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and amplified in a number of international instruments.

Particularly important for the work of the fund is Article 16 of the Proclamation of Tehran (1968) which underscored reproductive choice as a basic human right, stating "parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."

Because women's status affects and is affected by such demographic variables as fertility and infant mortality, reproductive choice is of vital importance to them. This special importance is affirmed in the 1979 Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 1984 International Conference on Population, the 1985 Nairobi World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, and the 1989 Amsterdam Declaration.

UNFPA supports activities aimed at improving the health of women and children as part of an integrated approach to maternal/child health and family planning. It gives strong support to the Safe Motherhood Initiative in all regions which focuses on the needs of women, particularly the girl-child and young women, and on the provision of quality mother-child health and family planning services.

It attaches great importance to enabling women to make informed choices, to ensuring that the choice of contraceptive methods is voluntary and non-

coercive and that family planning information and services are provided as part of a broader concern for the reproductive health of women.

Since the ultimate objective of UNFPA policy is the total integration of women in all programmes it supports, women's concerns are mainstreamed in all programme areas. Thus, one of the most acute needs of women and development is for gender-specific data. UNFPA has funded several efforts with the U.N. Statistical Office to ensure that in all national data-collection activities, information is collected, analysed and disseminated on a gender-specific basis.

UNFPA also extends support to women-specific projects which are directly aimed at improving the socio-economic status of women through, for example, provision of skill training and credit facilities.

UNFPA takes an active advocacy role, calling attention to the disparity of opportunities between women and men at all stages of their lives and the need to redress this imbalance. The fund maintains that, if women are to realise their full potential in their productive and community roles, they must be guaranteed their reproductive rights and must be able to manage their reproductive role.

These are essential if women's reproductive rights are to be secured. The ability to decide freely and in an informed manner the number and spacing of one's children is the first step in enabling women to exercise other choices.

The writer is Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. She delivered the above address on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

Assad, Hrawi discuss peace process

(Continued from page 1)

the next round of talks.

Syria wants implementation of U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 calling for return of all Arab lands occupied by Israel in 1967 while Lebanon wants implementation of U.N. Resolution 425 calling for Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

Disagreement has recently surfaced in the Lebanese government over Lebanon's stance towards the invitation. Foreign Minister Fariz Bouez reportedly backs a U.S. effort to arrange a phased return of the exiles.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri had maintained a hardline stance on the exiles' issue refusing to accept them in government-held territory and demanding that they be collectively repatriated in line with the U.N. Security Council Resolution 799.

Lebanese Foreign Ministry sources, who spoke in Beirut on condition of anonymity, said the conflict was the key reason that led Suhail Shamas, the ministry's director-general and chief of Lebanon's delegation to the peace talks, to submit his resignation to the cabinet.

The issue was expected to fi-

ture in Mr. Hrawi's talks in Damascus. Because of their influence in Lebanon, Syrian officials often mediated such disputes as Mr. Hrawi's government struggles to cement a peace accord that ended nearly 16 years of civil war in October 1990.

In Cairo, a senior PLO official said Saturday he expected the Arab parties involved in the peace talks to meet before the end of Ramadan — earlier than Syria's proposed date of March 28.

Nabil Shaath, political adviser to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, told reporters at Cairo airport:

"I expect the foreign ministers to meet before the end of Ramadan and not after the 'Eid Al Fitr as was announced in Syria." Dr. Shaath said on his way to Amman to meet Jordanian officials.

Ramadan is due to end on March 24.

Syrian officials said Friday Foreign Minister Farouk Al-Sharara consulted other Arab countries and then issued an invitation for two-day talks in Damascus on March 28-29.

The foreign ministers of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the foreign affairs chief of the PLO are due to attend.

PKK leader ready to halt violence

(Continued from page 1)

and saw no immediate sign of change in the situation.

"Bloodshed is still continuing and nobody has said they are going to lay down their arms," Turkish television quoted him as saying.

"We have repeatedly asked them to lay down their arms, you can't go anywhere by shedding blood."

Mr. Kazzaz said Mr. Ocalan planned to hold a news conference in Syria or Lebanon this week to announce his apparent change of heart ahead of the Nowrouz spring festival on March 21.

Kurds, Persians and some other peoples in the region celebrate Nowrouz as their new year. Turkish security forces are on alert to prevent any violence in the mainly Kurdish southeast and western cities with large Kurdish communities coinciding with

Nowrouz.

About 100 people died in clashes in the southeast of Nowrouz last year. The government said the Marxist PKK had provoked the violence. Kurds said troops opened fire on civilians.

Mr. Kazzaz said Mr. Talabani was not putting himself forward as a guarantor of Mr. Ocalan's sincerity and had in fact sent a verbal message with his letter, warning Turkish leaders that the PKK guerrilla chief had failed to keep his word in the past.

He said Mr. Talabani, now on a visit to Kuwait, had initially refused Mr. Ocalan's request for a meeting in Syria, but had changed his mind after his aides had talks with the PKK leaders.

Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish forces fought together in September and October to expel PKK fighters from their bases in the border mountains of northern Iraq. The armed forces have intensified pressure on PKK within Turkey since then.

Keating claims election victory

(Continued from page 1)

the 147-member house of representatives and is likely to pick up more.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation predicted Labour would have a majority of 11 seats.

"This is the sweetest victory of all," Mr. Keating told hundreds of cheering supporters in his home constituency of Bankstown in Sydney's western suburbs.

John Hewson of the Liberal National Coalition, conceded defeat about 15 minutes later in a plush Sydney hotel.

He estimated that there were 15 or 16 seats still in the balance, but said: "The probability is that the government will win."

The win for Labour gives the government another three years in power. It was the fifth consecutive election victory by the party.

Mr. Keating, a former treasurer who is widely blamed for the worst recession in 60 years and near 11 per cent unemployment rate, focused his campaign on Mr. Hewson's economic policies which he said would have hit low-income families and others in need.

He particularly concentrated on the opposition's proposed 15 per cent tax on most goods and

services which he had described as a "monster" that would change the Australian way of life.

Mr. Hewson had also proposed to limit government sponsored health care and dismantle a union-dominated labour market.

"It will be a long time before an opposition party will try and divide this country again," Mr. Keating said.

Results of voting for 40 of the 76 senate seats will not be available for several days because of the complicated voting system.

Afghan

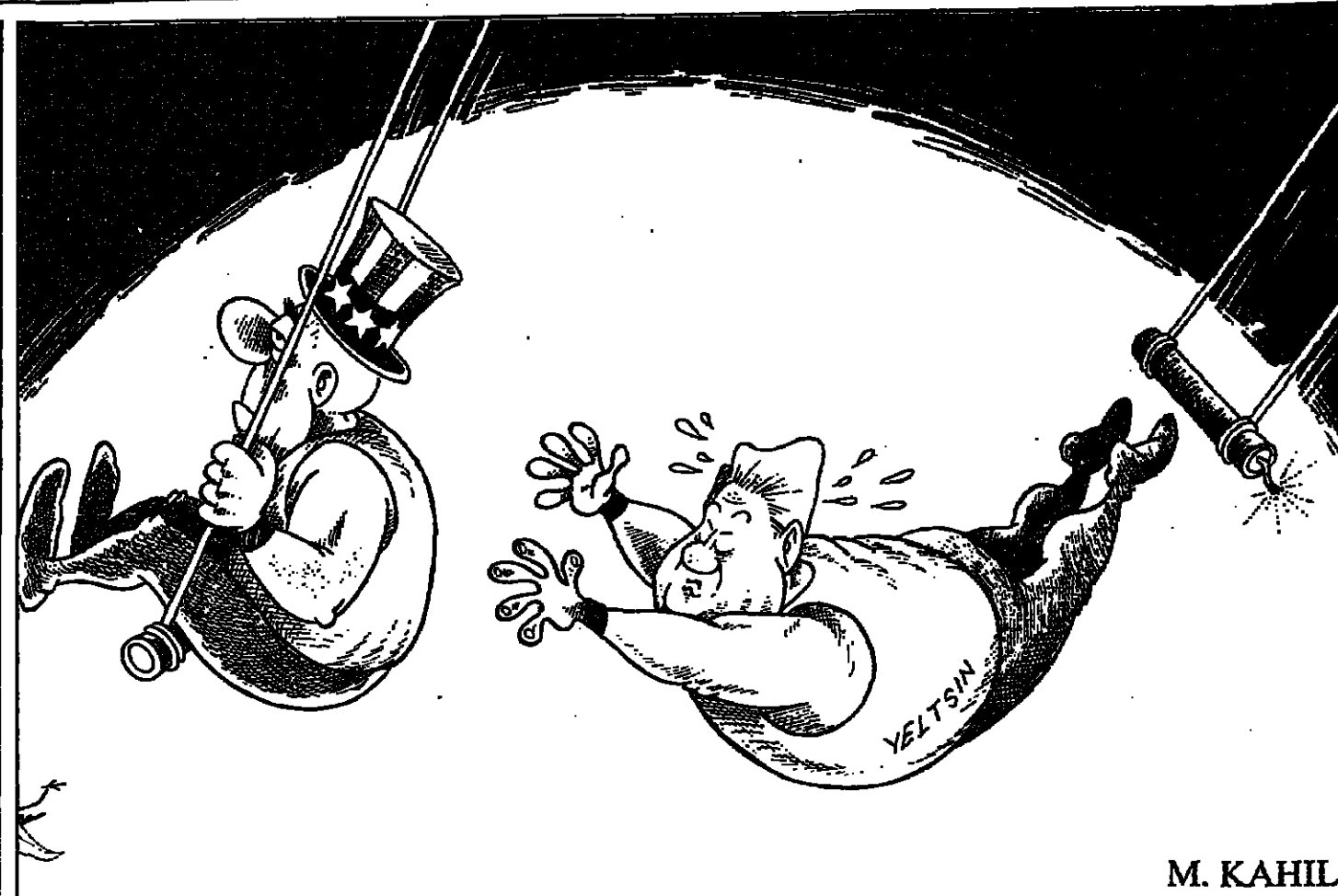
(Continued from page 1)

Soviet Union, Afghan factions turned against each other.

The fighting has killed 5,000 people and destroyed the capital, Kabul.

Details of the pact have not been disclosed. But officials have said the Afghan leaders have agreed to share power, give up their huge arsenals and work together to rebuild their country.

Mr. Rabbani is to retain his post as president for 18 months. A new government will be formed in 15 days with Mr. Hekmatyar, Mr. Rabbani's arch rival, as prime minister.



M. KAHIL

Can Russia rely on its armed forces?

By Ralph Boulton
Reuters

MOSCOW — Four Russian sailors die, abandoned and starved, on a bleak Pacific coastal base.

Close by, an air force general stands charged with embezzling a fortune, using his heavy bomber base as a "business centre" to shuttle wealthy entrepreneurs to China.

Corruption has struck at the heart of what was once the proudest and most cherished guardian of Soviet power.

The question of whether generals might march into the Kremlin, long whispered in Moscow streets and on jittery Western stock markets, may soon be overtaken by doubts that the army would be capable of controlling mother Russia, even if the summons came.

The worst scoundrels are those with the big stars on their big epaulettes," says Yuri Yudin, a career policeman and head of a parliamentary group investigating crime in the military.

"They are able to sell off anything and that's just what too many are doing," he told Reuters.

"It's enough that guns fall into criminal hands, but consider the dangers in our stores of chemical or nuclear arms."

The air force general arrested in the Far East was not alone in his enterprise. But some projects have ended more tragically.

Thirty-three people were killed when a military plane bound for Armenia crashed near the city of Tver late last year. Investigators found flight documents were falsified to show only eight passengers where 26 civilians were crammed aboard along with a huge cargo of consumer goods for sale in the south.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, in a subdued speech marking armed forces day last month, said that a large part of the officer corps was sullied with corruption. He promised a ruthless crackdown.

Some 3,000 officers had already been disciplined. Forty-six generals and other officers faced prosecution.

"What is going on in the armed forces is only a reflection of

general instability in society," Chief Military Prosecutor Valentin Punichev told Reuters. "I see no cause for panic."

Crooked officers are neither new nor unique to Russia. But the scale is alarming in a country that, by President Boris Yeltsin's acknowledgement, stands on the verge of chaos.

Mr. Terekhov's followers are so far limited largely to retired military, horrified by the decline of the mighty army they had served, and a very small number of middle-ranking officers.

But he counts on the low incomes of the majority of honest officers, fear of cutbacks and bleak conditions faced by men

conflicts on the former Soviet rim and now abound in Russia.

Sometimes, the weapons are seized in straightforward attacks by armed groups, but often the picture is more complex.

"The locals do a deal with officers to stage an attack on an arsenal," said one officer who has served in trouble spots. "The locals break into the base and a few wild shots are fired. They steal the guns and the officers get what they think a fair fee."

One Western analyst has estimated, using official figures, that the artillery stolen in the Transcaucasus district amounted to four times the stored artillery of the British army.

The worst problems accompany the withdrawal of troops from Germany and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, where much equipment, including buildings, must be sold.

Military trains and aircraft have been used to transport contraband in both directions at great profit to some.

A report by chief state inspector Yuri Boldyrev cites cases of the Western group of forces in Germany selling off equipment cheaply to private Russian firms. The military also bought local produce at prices well above market levels.

Investigations showed senior officers to be members of the boards of many of the firms. Mr. Boldyrev proposed in the report, obtained by Reuters, the dismissal of several officers, including a former aide to the commander of strategic rocket forces.

Mr. Yeltsin has sacked Mr. Boldyrev declaring his post abolished. Mr. Boldyrev said Mr. Yeltsin had told him regional civil administration chiefs had complained of his investigations.

The chief suffers in military as in civilian life as the honest citizens. While corruption flourishes, Russian soldiers risk their lives in hot spots of the former Soviet Union.

Besides the sailors who died on the Pacific Ruskii Base in a winter without proper food and fuel supplies, many are ill. At the weekend, Mr. Grachev sacked three officers and disciplined the fleet commander. But Ruskii is a symptom of a broader problem.

"The question of whether generals might march into the Kremlin ... may soon be overtaken by doubts that the army would be capable of controlling mother Russia, even if the summons came."

Mr. Yeltsin hinted strongly this month that he could suspend the constitution and dissolve the conservative legislature, meeting in emergency session on Wednesday, if it blocked his radical reforms. For that, he would need the clear backing of a united and disciplined army.

Erosion of central authority, already a fact of political life in the sprawling Russian federation, may encourage local commanders in crisis to decide their own loyalties. The 1991 coup collapsed before it could test the fabric of the forces.

"Crooked officers are neither new nor unique to Russia. But the scale is alarming in a country that, by President Boris Yeltsin's acknowledgement, stands on the verge of chaos."

Resentment has already spawned a radical breed of officer ready to voice ideas that would be termed treason elsewhere.

"If Yeltsin carries out his threat it will be the last thing he does as president," Colonel Stanislav Terekhov, head of the radical Officers' Union, told Reuters.

"He would be gone in two days...the high command might back him, but the army as a whole would not follow."

officers caught smuggling truckloads of copper to Estonia.

Nor is the heart of the armed establishment itself sacred.

The head of the defence ministry general staff's internal security section was arrested recently for stealing a computer.

Mr. Grachev has ordered a broader investigation of the ministry.

The most dangerous theft is that of arms, which have fuelled

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| COMPANY'S NAME | TRADING PREV. VOL. CLOSING PRICE | OPENING PRICE | CLOSING PRICE |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| ANAB BANK | 104,950 | 133,250 | 131,000 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK | 105,940 | 4,730 | 4,740 |
| CALRO AMMAN BANK | 27,240 | 25,000 | 25,100 |
| BANK OF JORDAN | 1,020 | 22,000 | 21,300 |
| INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK | 27,095 | 3,840 | 3,820 |
| THE HOUSING BANK | 34,815 | 3,770 | 3,770 |
| JORDAN KUNAT BANK | 89,909 | 2,170 | 2,160 |
| ANAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK | 6,121 | 5,190 | 5,450 |
| JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK | 547 | 4,170 | 4,170 |
| BUSINESS BANK | 25,454 | 3,040 | 3,110 |
| JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK | 9,850 | 5,800 | 5,900 |
| ANAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT | 47,218 | 2,140 | 2,120 |
| JORDAN TRADING | 12,140 | 3,650 | 3,600 |
| JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE | 10,951 | 3,980 | 3,980 |
| REX LAND INSURANCE | 4,523 | 3,300 | 3,350 |
| ANAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE | 9,460 | 2,140 | 2,150 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER | 25,721 | 1,180 | 1,200 |
| JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM | 5,500 | 3,050 | 3,050 |
| TAIRI DISTRICT ELECTRICITY | 520 | 1,050 | 1,050 |
| ANAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS | 685 | 5,850 | 5,850 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINE | 3,040 | 2,380 | 2,350 |
| NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES | 21,062 | 4,450 | 4,420 |
| REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 26,254 | 1,730 | 1,710 |
| JORDAN GOLF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 9,482 | 3,030 | 3,010 |
| PETRA ENTERTAINMENT & EQUIPMENTS LEASING | 3,048 | 1,350 | 1,350 |
| MAKHLAWI TRADING, IMPORTING & MAINTENANCE | 10,860 | 1,070 | 1,060 |
| UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONSTRUCTION HOTELS | 134,231 | 2,330 | 2,400 |
| JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES | 164,522 | 4,420 | 4,700 |
| JORDAN PHARMACEUTICALS | 16,300 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM | 7,480 | 2,330 | 2,340 |
| MOJIB INDUSTRIES | 9,972 | 5,920 | 6,000 |
| THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK & AGRICULTURAL | 29,100 | 9,700 | 9,700 |
| ANAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING | 30,379 | 6,650 | 6,640 |
| JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES | 39,708 | 5,800 | 5,900 |
| JORDAN DAIRY | 3,741 | 2,330 | 2,340 |
| THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING | 780 | 3,900 | 3,900 |
| ANAB CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 50,330 | 22,100 | 21,200 |
| SPINNING & WEAVING | 24,482 | 3,270 | 3,270 |
| JORDAN GLASS INDUSTRIES | 5,987 | 2,750 | 2,740 |
| BAL AL-SAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT | 24,659 | 6,250 | 6,250 |
| ANAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE | 32,327 | 11,200 | 11,050 |
| ANAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES | 50,063 | 22,100 | 21,200 |
| ALIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 42,529 | 13,700 | 13,620 |
| GENERAL INVESTMENT | 9,272 | 2,600 | 2,600 |
| ANAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING | 2,437 | 1,890 | 1,890 |
| JORDAN MEDICAL CORPORATION | 55,428 | 5,930 | 5,990 |
| NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY | 1,187 | 1,010 | 1,010 |
| NATIONAL INDUSTRIES | 10,149 | 4,140 | 4,140 |
| INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 15,570 | 2,510 | 2,540 |
| UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 21,741 | 2,100 | 2,100 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MACHINERY | 2,199 | 1,300 | 1,350 |
| JORDAN TRADING COMPANIES INDUSTRIES | 82,708 | 6,400 | 6,400 |
| NATIONAL CANAL & MINE INDUSTRIES | 36,899 | 4,500 | 4,520 |
| JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS | 47,683 | 1,150 | 1,150 |
| ANAB CEMENT PHASE 1 & CHEMICALS | 2,783 | 1,890 | 1,880 |
| JORDAN KUNAT CO. FOR AGR. & FOOD PROD. | 34,957 | 5,380 | 5,440 |
| INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIES | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL | 1,704,338 | | |
| NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET | 34,550 | | |
| TRADING VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET | 46,401 | | |

Ousted B.P. chief has £1.5m pay-off

LONDON (R) — Former British Petroleum (B.P.) chairman and chief executive Robert Horton received a £1.5 million (\$2.15 million) pay-off as compensation for being ousted in a boardroom bust-up last year, the oil group's annual report shows.

He was paid \$780,000 (\$1.12 million) for loss of office and a further £722,740 (\$1.04 million) for a special contribution into his pension, the report, published Saturday, showed.

The payments came after Mr. Horton earned £245,000 (\$351,000) in 1992 as salary prior to his ousting from London-headquartered British Petroleum Co. PLC.

Large pay-offs to corporate executives have come under criticism in Britain at a time when unemployment has risen to more than three million, or nearly 11 per cent of the workforce, and as the government presses for lower pay rises.

Further big pay-offs are expected after the abrupt departure this week on Ernest Mario, chief executive and deputy chairman of pharmaceuticals giant Glaxo, and Peter Rawlins, chief executive of the London Stock Exchange.

Media reports estimate Mr. Mario will receive up to £3 million (\$4.3 million).

Mr. Morton quit in June last year when his abrasive style and personal commitment to B.P. maintaining its dividend to shareholders led to division at board level.

B.P. itself is shedding jobs fast, with the workforce down to 97,650 at the end of 1992 from 111,900 the previous year and further heavy job losses in the pipeline.

But new B.P. chief executive David Simon, despite a small rise in salary, took an overall pay cut in 1992, a year when the group slid to a loss of £458 million (\$656.2 million), after write-offs and charges.

Primerica and American Express agree on \$1b brokerage merger

NEW YORK (R) — Primerica Corp. wrapped up a deal to buy American Express Co.'s Shearson Lehman Bros for about \$1 billion Friday, creating the world's second-biggest brokerage after Merrill Lynch Co.

The deal, expected to be completed by early July, will end American Express' troubled tenure as Shearson's parent and put the brokerage back in the hands of Primerica chairman and chief executive Sanford Weill, who sold it in 1981 for stock valued at \$930 million.

Under the deal Primerica will merge Shearson into its Smith Barney, Harris Upham Co. The new brokerage, dubbed Smith Barney Shearson, will have more than 10,500 brokers and nearly 500 branches, compared with Merrill's 12,000 brokers and 450 branches.

An unspecified number of Shearson Lehman positions will be eliminated due to duplication, American Express president and chief executive officer Harvey

Golub said in a letter to employees.

Smith Barney chairman and chief executive Frank Zarb, who will run the merged firm, said he did not yet know how many jobs will be cut.

Plans for the merger were first revealed Tuesday, although Mr. Golub said in the letter that Mr. Weill approached American Express about buying Shearson in late February.

Analysts praised the offer as positive for both sides, allowing American Express to concentrate on reviving its core travel and charge-card business, while adding muscle to Primerica, an already formidable financial powerhouse.

In addition to the brokerage Primerica has an insurance subsidiary and a consumer credit group.

"With this transaction, Smith Barney takes a quantum leap forward in achieving what would have required years to develop

internally," Mr. Weill said in a statement.

On the New York Stock Exchange, Primerica's stock closed up \$1.50 at \$49.50, and American Express jumped 50 cents to \$27.875.

While the deal includes Shearson's retail brokerage and asset management operations, it does not include Lehman Bros., the investment banking and research unit, which will provide services to the merged company for up to two years.

Under terms of the agreement, Primerica will pay American Express \$850 million in cash, \$125 million in Primerica convertible preferred stock and \$25 million in common equity warrants.

Primerica said it also agreed to pay out up to \$50 million annually for three years plus 10 per cent of after-tax profits in excess of \$250 million per year over a five-year period.

"I think this is a win-win-win situation," said Dan Murray, who

follows the brokerage industry for Argus Research. "It takes the retail brokerage power for a Shearson and combines it with some people who know how to manage a firm like that."

He noted that by selling Shearson, American Express will save \$600 million of \$1 billion in capital it had planned to pump into the securities unit.

Mr. Weill, who is known as an expert in the retail brokerage industry, joined American Express after selling Shearson to the financial-services giant but left in 1985. He reportedly chafed under the leadership of American Express chairman James Robinson, who stepped down a month ago under intense board pressure.

The deal has been approved by the boards of both companies but requires regulatory approval.

Joseph Plumeri, managing partner of Shearson Lehman, will serve as president of the new company with responsibility for retail sales and marketing.

Serb bank closes doors to panic-stricken depositors

BELGRADE (R) — Thousands of angry and panic-stricken depositors besieged the branch offices of a leading Yugoslav private bank Friday when they failed to open.

The Jugoskandic Bank closed all its branches in Serbia and Montenegro on the orders of its owner Jedinim Vasiljevic, who left the country Monday.

He has threatened to reveal details of corruption among leading politicians and businessmen in the country, stricken by U.N. sanctions and plagued by hyperinflation.

There was no word of explanation on Jugoskandic doors to anxious depositors.

Thousands waited around the clock from Monday to withdraw their money from the bank which paid huge monthly interest of 200 per cent on local dollar accounts, helping ordinary people survive annual inflation of 20,000 per cent.

The Belgrade press reported that Mr. Vasiljevic had ordered the closure for the next 10 days

for "security reasons."

Acting bank manager Stevan Protic attempting to defuse tension and limit damage, told Belgrade television the bank "might be open on Monday."

"This is the last straw, we have been cheated, we have been deprived of our last life-line," said an angry depositor outside one of the main city centre branches.

Most of the bank's clients are retired people with monthly pensions of around \$15 in a country where milk costs a dollar a litre.

Mr. Vasiljevic's accusations of corruption in Serbian and Montenegrin political and business circles prompted fears that he had fled the country with the money, a charge he has denied, promising to return at an unspecified date.

"The country's economy has finally collapsed," Vasiljevic was my only source of income," an elderly woman said.

As Jugoskandic folded, the biggest Serbian private bank Dafiment announced sharp cuts in interest rates on hard currency accounts, from 15 per cent a

month to an average of 20 per cent a year.

Dafiment's owner Dafina Mila-novic told Reuters Friday: "I feel it is time for Serbia's economy and finances to turn around and gear up for post-war operations and revival," she told Reuters.

Meanwhile Yugoslav customs authorities were reported to be cracking down on the smuggling of foreign currency abroad.

In the last 24 hours customs officials seized \$156,000 in foreign currency at the Hungarian border, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug reported Friday.

The deputy head of Serbia's newly-constituted financial police, Ilija Petrovic, said Friday over 1,000 private exchange offices and small banks had mushroomed in the past 12 months and promised to crack down on their operations.

Some of them, notably those owned by Serb member of parliament and paramilitary leader Zeljko Raznjatovic-Arkan in central Belgrade, remained closed Friday.

Over 400,000 Croats strike over hyperinflation

ZAGREB (R) — More than 400,000 Croatian workers staged

warning strikes Friday to protest at their impoverishment from war-induced hyperinflation and diminishing social benefits under privatisation.

Leaders of Croatia's three major unions representing clerical, transport, service industry and some factory workers as well as teachers accused the government of carrying out a privatisation programme at labour's expense.

"The privatisation of ex-communist enterprises is a failure due to the government's insistence that it be carried out in wartime," said Vesna Ivkovic-Stupcic, a union vice-president.

"We have been reduced to a level of misery where the average worker can no longer maintain his family. We demand that the enormous drop in the real value of wages be stopped and the burden of war be equally and justly shared," she pointed out.

Spokesmen for the unions said about 85 per cent of their members, or 429,000 workers, joined

the walkout.

Some stopped work for just a symbolic 12 minutes to avoid crippling vital services while others stayed out for the full four hours — 1100 to 1500 GMT — called for by union chiefs.

No protest rallies were held. The walkout, conducted under the slogan, "An hourly wage equal to the price of a loaf of bread," hit thousands of companies and public institutions in eight of 21 counties.

The other 13 counties were not affected because they are either occupied by rebel minority Serbs or border open war zones, such as the Krajina enclave skirting the Adriatic coast.

Berislav Belac, president of the enterprise and social service sector union, said the workers were forced to strike to call attention to the danger of "spontaneous social unrest."

He said the walkout's duration was deliberately kept short to avoid compounding Croatia's economic crisis but threatened a full-blown strike if the right-wing government did not reverse the

paupeirisation of ordinary Croats.

Mr. Belac called on the government of President Franjo Tudjman to overhaul its domestic policy cabinet and hold a special session of parliament to address Croatia's economic nosedive.

Costs for a modernised military confronting Serb insurgents, 650,000 war refugees and repair of war damage have catapulted yearly inflation to more than 2,000 per cent.

The inflationary spiral, set off by Croatia's 1991 war of independence from Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia, has reduced real monthly wages to a rough average of \$60.

Prices now resemble those in affluent Western Europe. Croats have also been hit by cuts in blanket social benefits such as health insurance.

President Tudjman maintains a tight grip over much of Croatia's news media to stem any outward criticism, but discontent with the republic's economic tailspin under his tenure has been building in recent months.

Oman, India sign pipeline, refineries accords

DUBAI (R) — Oman and India signed two memorandums of understanding Saturday on an underwater gas pipeline and the building of two oil refineries in India, deals that could be worth billions of dollars.

The official Omani News Agency said the governmental Oman Oil Company Ltd. would carry out an economic feasibility study before starting to build the proposed 900-mile, 42-inch (1,450 km, 1,07 metre) pipeline from Oman to India.

It did not estimate the project's cost, but the specialist magazine Middle East Economic Digest (MEED) had reported earlier it could cost as much as \$4.5 billion. It said that as proposed the

pipeline would be laid on the continental shelf, meaning it would follow the coastline of Pakistan and possibly Iran all the way to India.

The Omani agency said the amount of gas pumped would depend on India's needs. MEED said the proposed line would carry 50 million cubic metres (1.8 billion cubic feet) of gas a day.

Oman, a small oil producer which controls with Iran the entrance to the Gulf, signed an agreement with Kazakhstan last year to form a consortium to build a pipeline for the former Soviet republic's potentially large oil exports.

The 1992 Arab Oil and Gas Directory said Oman's proven

gas reserves had nearly doubled by early 1992 from two years earlier to reach 17.2 trillion cubic feet (490 billion cubic metres).

Fifty million cubic metres a day, if that is the rate at which the gas would flow to India, would exploit those reserves at the rate of 18.2 billion cubic metres (643 billion cubic feet) a year.

The two accords were signed in Muscat by Oman's Deputy Prime Minister for Financial and Economic Affairs Qais Bin Abdul Monim Al Zawawi and Oil Minister Said Bin Ahmad Al Shantari and India's Oil Minister Satish Sharma, the agency said.

It said the two refineries, one in central India and one in western India, would have a total

capacity of 120,000 barrels per day and Oman would provide them with crude oil.

The agency said each refinery would be built as a joint venture between the Oman Oil Company and India's Hindustan Petroleum Corp. Ltd and India Bharat Oil Company.

It did not say how much they would cost but said 48 per cent of each project would be offered to the public.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

Accounting conference to be held in Bahrain in April

NEW YORK (Agencies) — The harmonisation of standard setting in the Arab World and tackling the legal challenges posed by the new world order are two of the issues to be discussed at the Third Arab International Accounting Conference on Challenges Facing Arab Accountants, scheduled for April 10-12 in Manama, Bahrain.

The conference will highlight a number of subjects that affect the way Arabs do business among themselves and with other countries. Among the topics scheduled for discussion are "Challenges Facing Accountants," "Litigation and Professional Indemnity," "Conflict of Interest," "Professional Changes under the New World Order," "Current Practices in the Arab World," "Regulating the Practice in the Arab World," "Harmonisation of Standard-Setting in the Arab World," and "Accountants and their International Qualification."

Talal Abu Ghazaleh, president of the Arab Society Certified Accountants, says the conference will do much to promote economic development in the region. Emphasising the need for regional compatibility of accounting standards, he said that it was the only way to real economic development in the Arab World.

The conference will be followed by a two-day workshop sponsored by the United Nations Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts for international standards of accounting and reporting.

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S. Korea troops put on alert after Pyongyang nuclear move

SEOUL (R) — South Korea Saturday put its 640,000-member armed forces on alert after Communist North Korea's abrupt decision to pull out of an international accord on stopping the spread of nuclear weapons.

"Defence Minister Kwon Young-Hae ordered the alert as a precaution against any possible North Korean provocation" in connection with North Korea's announcement to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), a Defence Ministry spokesman said.

He said the order was issued while Kwon was inspecting troops taking part in the joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises under way in the South.

A Defence Ministry spokesman would not elaborate on details of the alert.

On Tuesday Pyongyang went on what its military chief, Kim Jong-Il, called a "semi-war" footing to coincide with the start of the military exercises.

While Seoul and Washington say the annual Team Spirit manoeuvres are purely defensive, Pyongyang calls them a pretext for a nuclear attack on the North.

Military sources said there were no unusual North Korean troop movements this week along the heavily fortified border between the Koreas.

The Stalinist leadership of North Korea, suspected for years of working to build nuclear weapons, said Friday it was

scrapping its membership in the NPT rather than allow international inspection of its secret nuclear sites.

Seoul officials Saturday said they were studying counter-measures against the North Korean move but had ruled out military action.

"The government is consulting with the United States and other countries on how to react. But we will not consider any military action," a South Korean Foreign Ministry official said.

Another government official said the South was likely to ask the North to hold a Joint Nuclear Control Committee meeting to discuss nuclear inspections.

Talks between the two Koreas on proposed nuclear inspections broke down last January after the North protested against Seoul's plan to hold military exercises with the United States.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam told ruling party leaders at a meeting Saturday that North Korea "is courting isolation from the international community."

A statement issued late Friday night after an emergency meeting of South Korean cabinet ministers said Seoul was "fully prepared to promptly and resolutely deal with any provocation by North Korea following its withdrawal from the NPT."

Pyongyang's announcement fuelled the West's already strong apprehensions about North

Korea's nuclear capacity and left the isolated state at risk from U.N. sanctions.

In a broadcast monitored in Tokyo Saturday, North Korea warned the United States of grave consequences if sanctions were imposed.

South Korean analysts say the North's hardline nuclear stance will strengthen the position of hawks in the Seoul government and hamper detente moves between the Koreas.

Mr. Christopher threatened North Korea Friday with possible international sanctions after its Communist rulers pulled out of an agreement to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

Asked if the United States would push for United Nations sanctions against North Korea, Mr. Christopher said:

"Certainly the North Korean situation is a serious one today and if they continue on the path that they are on I think that that will have to be considered."

"We hope that they might withdraw, but if they don't I think that we'll have to consider further steps."

Mr. Christopher told reporters North Korea's decision "raises many suspicions in our minds" and Washington would be watching its actions closely in the next few days.

Earlier, Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the U.N., called on North Korea to withdraw its declaration immediately.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington was already in touch with its allies on how to react. The matter is currently before the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has the authority to refer it to the United Nations Security Council.

China prevented the Security Council from taking a strong stand Friday on North Korea's withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, diplomats said.

In private consultations on the matter among Security Council Nations, Japanese Ambassador Yoshio Hatano called the North Korean decision a threat to international security, and therefore a problem for the Council.

British Ambassador David Hannay said publicly that Japan found considerable support for that position: "A large number of ambassadors expressed great concern about the matter... the implications were serious and would need to be considered very carefully."

"It is viewed by most of the governments of countries represented on the Security Council as a very serious matter," Mr. Hannay added.

But China, North Korea's key ally, vehemently opposed that position, said diplomats present in the meeting, speaking on condition of anonymity.



BOMBAY BLAST DAMAGE: A policeman stands beside a charred automobile outside the Air India Building a day after a powerful explosion rocked the structure in this western port city.

Japan crown prince likely to be married on June 9

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito will likely wed career diplomat Masako Owa on June 9, news reports said Saturday. But the date must be approved by the cabinet before it is made official, the reports say. The 33-year-old Prince Naruhito's engagement to Miss Owa, 29, was officially announced mid-January.

Row over rock ban in ancient Roman arena

ROME (R) — Italy's culture minister, blasted by rock stars and the country's greatest opera tenor for banning pop concerts from a 1,900-year-old Roman arena, denied that he was guilty of "cultural racism." The pop at Verana's amphitheatre sparked a heated national debate and drawn sharp criticism from opera star Luciano Pavarotti. Italy's top pop and rock stars, in an open letter to Culture Minister Alberto Ronchey earlier this week, 39 performers complain the ban was "cultural racism" because classical music concerts would still be allowed in the arena, among the largest in the Roman world. Mr. Ronchey denied he was biased against pop music, saying he himself was a fan. He said the ban was instituted solely to protect the ancient arena from vibrations that could damage its structure. "It is my job to protect Italy's monuments even if it means being booed at insulted," he said. Pavarotti entered the debate when the Italian newspaper Corriere Della Sera asked him for his opinion. Pavarotti said he had heard about the decision because he had been out of the country. "Are you joking? That's disgraceful and unjustified," he was quoted as saying.

'Mad cow' disease returns to haunt Britons

LONDON (R) — Fears over a possibility of humans catching "mad cow" disease were fuelled in Britain following the death from a brain disorder of a dairy farmer whose herd was infected with the animal virus. Scientists writing in the medical journal The Lancet said the case of the 61-year-old man was the first fatal involving direct occupational contact with mad cow disease. The death "raised the possibility of casual link," they said. The farmer was struck down with Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (CJD) two years after one of his herd had to be slaughtered in 1989 at the height of a scare over Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle. The farmer had drunk milk from the herd for several years. About 30 people a year die in Britain from CJD, which causes loss of memory, deterioration in speech and blindness. Government officials said Friday there was no scientific evidence of a link between BSE in cattle and CJD in humans. "Beef can be eaten safely by everyone," chief medical officer Kenneth Calman said in a statement. The Agriculture Ministry says the disease, caused by cows fed with bone meal containing the remains of sheep infected with the Scrapie virus, is now under control although confirmed deaths from BSE are averaging 885 a week compared with 675 a year ago.

Zimbabwe students decry 'pain' doctor

HARARE (R) — Some 100 students protested in Harare Friday against a white doctor dubbed "Dr. Poison" after he was accused of murdering five patients during experiments. The students from Zimbabwe University carried placards denouncing Dr. Richard Gladwell McGown who was charged in a Harare court last week in connection with experiments in pain control which authorities say killed five patients. One of the placards carried by the protesters who marched through downtown said "McGown, we killed him" and another "McGown, 56, was arrested on March 3, a day after a parliamentary select committee reported he had admitted to having "undertaken experiments without following laid down procedures to pain." Dr. McGown denies the charges. The committee was set up last year to probe allegations against Dr. McGown of "negligence, gross incompetence and disgraceful conduct emanating from cases of anaesthetic deaths." The committee said the Scottish-born doctor had given more than 550 people between 1986 and 1992.

Indian police question suspect in bombing

BOMBAY (R) — Indian police were reported to be questioning a Kashmiri Saturday in connection with a string of powerful bombs which killed 225 people and injured 1,100 in Bombay, India's commercial capital.

United News of India (UNI) said the unnamed suspect had given the names of five Kashmiri "accomplices" and an Iranian and a major search was under way for them.

There was no immediate confirmation of the report, but senior Indian government officials said there were suspicions of external involvement because several car bombs were among the 13 blasts which rocked the city of 12 million people Friday.

"None of our own militant organisations is known to have this kind of expertise or be capable of organising such a series of bombs with such precision," said one official in New Delhi.

"The obvious places to look are in the Middle East, where car bombs have been used for a long time," he said. "Of course we are not ruling out the possibility that Indian militants have used foreign expertise."

Kashmiri militants have been fighting Delhi's rule over the Indian part of Kashmir for three years. Police and hospitals have reported more than 9,000 deaths in the rebellion.

Some of the militants fought with the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan, alongside other Muslims who saw the battle against a Moscow-backed government as a jihad, or holy war.

But the Kashmiri militants

have largely confined their battle for secession from overwhelming Hindu India to the Kashmir Valley, their Muslim majority stronghold.

They have made threats to carry their war into the Indian heartland, but there has been no prior evidence they have done so.

UNI said the Kashmiri suspect was seized by the security staff of a luxury hotel soon after a bomb exploded there Friday. It did not say if the man had been formally arrested.

Police said that whoever was responsible for the bomb attacks, they believed a well-financed foreign terrorist group was involved.

"It's the work of a foreign group. We are looking into all aspects, including a possible West Asian (Middle East) connection," a senior police official told reporters.

The first of Friday's bombs hit the Bombay Stock Exchange, India's premier bourse. Officials said it appeared to have been a car bomb which exploded in the basement.

The similarity to a car bomb blast in New York's World Trade Centre on Feb. 26, in which at least five people were killed and more than 1,000 injured, had led to police investigating a possible Middle East connection, they said.

Intelligence agents and explosive experts Saturday sifted through the debris left by the Bombay bomb, searching for clues on what kind of explosive and what kind of triggering devices were used.

Police said earlier they were hunting for a man who had checked in at two luxury hotels where bombs exploded, but did not identify him.

Some 6,000 paramilitary troops are being sent to Bombay by train to help beef up security in a city still recovering from bloody Hindu-Muslim riots in December and January in which at least 700 died.

In the January riots, most of the victims were Muslims, as Hindu mobs attacked their homes and set fire to Muslim shops, triggering an exodus from the city. Officials had feared the explosions could spark more clashes but said there were no reports of sectarian strife.

The army has been put on full alert and police set up checkpoints throughout the city to search cars and pedestrians in an attempt to prevent further attacks.

In New Delhi, the Iranian embassy denied involvement in Friday's blasts and said it had no links with the suspected Iranian accomplice.

"I don't believe any Iranian could be involved," Charge d'Affaires Ali Reza Ahamati told Reuters. "Our relations with India are good and we don't believe in any clandestine approach."

Mr. Ahamati said Iran had protested to India over the recent Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay.

"But I assure you one hundred per cent that the government of Iran is not involved in the latest incident in Bombay," Mr. Ahamati said.

Clinton visits U.S. carrier

ABOARD THE USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (R) — President Bill Clinton, the first U.S. leader since World War II with no military experience, visited this giant warship in a flight jacket emblazoned "Bill Clinton, Commander-in-Chief."

In a symbolic demonstration of his new role as chief of America's military, Mr. Clinton landed by helicopter aboard the 96,000-ton nuclear-powered carrier 70 miles off Virginia to observe flight operations and wish the 6,200 crew members smooth sailing on a six-month deployment to the Mediterranean.

"While you carry out your mission so far from home over the next few months, we back at home will be engaged in a raging debate about defence policy," he told the crew. "As we reduce defence spending, we will not leave the men and the women who helped us win the cold war out in the cold."

"As you follow the news of these events during your voyage... I ask you to remember this, as your commander-in-chief I am immensely proud of who you are, what you stand for and what you are doing," Mr. Clinton said.

He said today's men and women in uniform "may be called upon to answer not only the sound of guns but also a call of distress, a summons to keep the peace, even the cry of starving children."

All the flourishes of military protocol awaited the president: The ship's bells tolling him aboard, the loudspeaker booming, "United States, arriving," the sailors parading at attention on the flight deck, the guided missile destroyer Arleigh Burke steaming past on review while Mr. Clinton waved.

Earlier Florida prosecutor Janet Reno became the first woman attorney general in U.S. history Friday, filling the last vacancy in President Clinton's cabinet.

Ms. Reno, 54, who was confirmed by the Senate on a 98-0 vote Thursday, was sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Byron White in the White House Roosevelt Room.

Ecologists slip, RPR thin lead over UDF

PARIS (R) — France's Ecologist parties, which earlier this year were on a pre-election roll, have lost momentum ahead of a parliamentary vote on March 21 and 28, according to two opinion polls.

The polls showed that support for the Ecologists peaked earlier this year and that they now lag behind the Socialist Party, which they had appeared poised to beat.

The surveys indicated the centre-right opposition was on track for a convincing win and would capture between 412 and 440 of the 555 districts in mainland France.

Both showed the Gaullist Rally For the Republic (RPR) maintaining a thin lead over its centrist partner, the Union for French Democracy (UDF).

A BVA poll, conducted March 9-11, showed that 12 per cent of those polled would vote for the Ecologists, down from 14.5 per cent in a March 1-4 survey and 19 per cent in late January.

A CSA survey compiled March 10-11 gave 16 per cent to the Ecologists compared with 17 per cent in a Feb. 24-25 poll and 19.5 per cent in early February.

The Socialists won 18 per cent of the new BVA poll and 18.5 per cent of CSA's.

Many Ecologist voters are former Socialist supporters who have switched allegiances because of discontent with the governing party's record. It was unclear where disenchanted Ecologist voters had now turned.

The BVA poll gave the RPR 20 per cent of the vote and the UDF 19 per cent, while in the CSA survey the RPR captured 20.5 per cent and the UDF 18.

The outcome of the neck-and-neck contest between the two mainstream conservative parties may determine who President Francois Mitterrand chooses as prime minister.

An IFOP poll Thursday showed the UDF, for the first time, creeping ahead of its conservative rival with 20 per cent compared to 19.5 per cent for the RPR.

Meanwhile, an official inquiry confirmed Friday that French journalists and lawyers had been subjected to telephone tapping under President Francois Mitterrand but said it had not yet determined who ordered the bugging.

The newspaper Liberation said Friday Mr. Mitterrand's personal security office had requested more than 100 wiretaps in the

mid-1980s. The report compounded the Socialist government's embarrassment nine days before a general election.

Paul Bouchet, head of the National Control Commission on Security Intercepts, said in a statement: "It is clear that... the wiretaps were 'a severe violation not only of the victims' private lives but also of the professional secrecy to which journalists and lawyers are entitled in a democratic society.'"

"At the present stage of the investigation, it is premature to try to determine finally the exact nature of the wiretaps and the identity of those responsible," he said.

Liberation published documents purporting to show that a since-dissolved security unit bugged the telephones of dozens of people between 1983 and 1986, including journalists, an actress, lawyers and an author.

At least 114 wiretaps were requested for reasons ranging from suspected arms trading to terrorist links or presidential security, but it was not clear if all the taps were actually carried out, the left-wing daily said.

A presidential spokesman declined comment.

Security Council condemns UNITA rebels in Angola

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council has threatened unspecified action against Angola's UNITA rebels for creating mayhem in the southern African nation through renewed fighting and failing to participate seriously in peace talks.

A resolution, adopted unanimously, also asks Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to organize a meeting between the government and UNITA "at the highest possible level" before April 30.

Diplomats said Dr. Ghali might arrange a session between Angolan President Eduardo Dos Santos and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi in London in early April en route to a tentatively planned trip to Cambodia.

But the resolution was careful not to set a place and venue following UNITA's demand that the secretary-general negotiate personally in New York or Geneva rather than his envoy, Margaret Anstee of Britain.

The resolution made clear that Ms. Anstee, whom Mr. Savimbi wants removed from her post, had the full backing of the Security Council and condemned all attacks against her.

The Council threatened any party that jeopardises the peace accords with "all appropriate measures" a veiled reference to sanctions against UNITA and diplomatic isolation of any government it might form.

UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, returned to the battlefield after rejecting its defeat by the government party in U.N.-

run elections last September.

Ms. Anstee, the chief U.N. representative in Angola, has told the Security Council she thought Mr. Savimbi had about 60,000 armed men and controlled 105 out of 120 provinces or about 70 per cent of the country.

The United States and South Africa had supported and armed Mr. Savimbi almost since the country gained independence from Portugal against the government backed by the Soviet Union.

The mandate of the U.N. Angola Verification Mission, which now has only 224 personnel in Angola, expires at the end of April and the Council must decide then whether to beef up the force or pull it out and concentrate on mediation only.

The resolution "strongly condemns" violations by UNITA of the peace accords, the results of the September elections, its failure to take part in political institutions, its withdrawal from the new Angolan armed forces and "its seizure by force of the provincial capital and municipalities."

It demands UNITA accept the results of the elections, an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of a "meaningful dialogue" under U.N. auspices.

UNITA and the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) signed a 1991 accord in Lisbon pledging to end their 15-year old civil war.

The chief U.N. envoy in Angola has warned the southwest African nation could become as devastated as Somalia,

Japan politician indicted for tax evasion

TOKYO (R) — Japanese prosecutors said Saturday they had indicted former ruling party Vice-President Shin Kanemaru on tax evasion charges.

A senior prosecution official said the 78-year-old Kanemaru, long the "kingmaker" of Japanese politics, was believed to have concealed 1987 income of 200 million yen (\$1.69 million).

His former political secretary, Masahisa Haibara, had been indicted on similar charges, said Norio Igarashi, head of the special investigation squad at the Tokyo Prosecutors' Office.

The pair were arrested a week ago. Each risks a possible five-year jail term or a 500 million yen (\$4.2 million) fine, as well as possible income tax penalties if found guilty.

Mr. Igarashi said Mr. Kanemaru was alleged to have evaded about 118 million yen (\$1 million) in taxes on some 200 million yen of undeclared income in 1987.

Aide Haibara, 49, evaded an estimated 26 million yen (\$220,000) on income of 50 million yen (\$422,500), the indictment said.

The pair face trial before the Tokyo District Court.

Mr. Igarashi said prosecutors had brought the charges to beat Sunday's deadline for prosecution of irregularities in the 1987/88 tax year.

Massacre evidence points to Khmer Rouge — U.N.

KOK KDOL, Cambodia (R) — U.N. officials investigating a massacre of ethnic Vietnamese in northwestern Cambodia say evidence points to Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

A team consisting of U.N. civilian police, military observers and human rights officials recovered several boats used in the attack and questioned three men who admitted operating the craft during the assault.

At least 37 people were killed and 29 wounded in Wednesday's incident.

"They say it was the D.K. (Khmer Rouge)," a U.N. police officer told Reuters Friday.

The men, all fishermen, were from a village about 15 km (nine miles) southeast of the massacre site of Chong Kneas, a floating village at the edge of the Tonle Sap (great lake).

The boatmen told investigators they were ordered by a group of Khmer Rouge to hand over their boats and accompany them on the night of the massacre.

"They said the men, many in uniform, did not call each other by given names but used 'comrade' when speaking," one U.N. investigator said.

At Kok Kdol, one six-metre (20-foot), wooden boat still had bullet marks on its hull. On Thursday, military observers found several spent AK-47 cartridge cases in the boat.

One man nervously told them how his brother's life had been threatened unless he gave his boat to the Khmer Rouge.

"I asked my brother 'why did you give your boat to the D.K.?' and he said 'if I refuse they'll kill me'."

The wife of the presangang

boat owner said: "When he came back, he was afraid and did not say anything. He went to sleep."

The massacre was the worst attack on ethnic Vietnamese since Cambodia's four political factions signed peace accords in 1991. The victims included many women and children.

The accords led to the deployment of a 22,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force but the Khmer Rouge is refusing to implement the terms. Violence has increased as general elections approach in May.

The Khmer Rouge bear deep animosity toward the Vietnamese, who invaded Cambodia in 1978 and ousted them from power.

Khmer Rouge radio often broadcasts anti-Vietnamese propaganda and the group's guerrillas have been blamed by the United

Nations for previous attacks on ethnic Vietnamese communities.

The U.N. military observers said Khmer Rouge fighters had been frequent visitors to Kok Kdol since government forces withdrew from the village in early March and had threatened to kill U.N. personnel if they went there.

The investigators dismissed a statement from the Khmer Rouge saying the attack was the work of bandits.

"The killings here are much more synchronised than bandits or rouge units," one military officer said. "To me, it's a long day trip to go just to rob somebody."

"That's why we think it's the NADK (Khmer Rouge)," he said using the group's formal title, the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea.